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ROOSEVELT'S FIFTH TERM

For the fifth time in succession, the American people, in defiance of the press, the business Czars and the pollsters, have voted for Franklin Delano Roosevelt. To say this is no disparagement of Mr. Truman, whose obstinate faith in his party and in the New Deal was the largest individual factor in this electoral miracle. Kicked about by every expert and leader of opinion, he kept his head while all about him were losing theirs. Even more significant, however, than his personal success is the fact that the American people have voted against an attempt to put the clock back to Coolidge time. Democratic majorities have been returned in both the Senate and the House of Representatives because the Republican candidates were so blankly and blindly reactionary that the man in the street could not stomach them at any price.

The result is all the more astonishing because Americans, more than any other people, like to be on the winning side; and the pollsters had used all their considerable influence to make a Republican victory appear an absolute certainty. Millions of dollars' worth of advertising depended on the result, and this may have unconsciously influenced their minds. Elmo Roper, who runs the *Fortune* poll, probably the most scientific of them all, announced five weeks ago that he was not going to waste any more time testing an election which was a foregone conclusion. Dr. Gallup, who once before predicted a New Deal defeat, has been caught out again. But millions of decent ordinary people refused to be bewitched on to the pollsters' bandwagon. They resisted the most formidable psychological assault ever mounted against the nerves of a democratic nation, and they repudiated the definition of the American way of life laid down by the big business interests which control the Republican party machine.

The Democrats' success stems from an event which seemed at the time to make their defeat a certainty. Even under Roosevelt's leadership, they could never have a really progressive programme, or rather the elector could never believe in the genuineness of their liberal aspirations, as long as the party had to compromise its principles in order to buy the votes of the Southern protagonists of White ascendancy. At the Democratic Convention, Mr. Truman was freed from this inhibition both by the Dixiecrats' secession and by the disintegration of the political machines under bosses like Mayor Hague, in the big cities. Harassed in addition by Mr. Wallace's threat on the extreme Left, the President's position seemed so hopeless that he had nothing to lose by announcing an all-out New Deal policy and making a frontal assault on the record of the Republican Congress. It was certainly this sudden lurch to the Left which in the last weeks of the campaign won him the support of organised Labour, already indignant at the Taft-Hartley Act; and, even more important, it caused the abstention of many voters who had been swung over to a passive Republicanism by the apparent inevitability of Mr. Dewey's victory.

The issues in America last week were not so very dissimilar from those which faced British voters in 1945 and will face them again in 1950. The American people have voted against the uncontrolled profits and inflation which go by the name of free enterprise. They have shown a preference for a liberal middle way between the extremes of Coolidgism and Communism which is at least analogous to the middle way for which Socialist Britain stands. But this does not mean that they will get it. Mr. Attlee, after routing Mr. Churchill, came to power with a clear Socialist mandate. The Democrats' New Deal, however, is not a clear-cut policy, but only an unformulated repudiation of jungle capitalism. We can say with certainty that America will not swing Right after this election. But there is no way of foretelling whether or how far it will now move Leftwards. Organized Labour will demand the fulfilment of Mr. Truman's pledges to break White ascendancy in the South, repeal the Taft-Hartley Act, re-introduce price-controls and institute a Federal housing programme. Each of these reforms may well be opposed by a majority of Congressmen, since Southern reactionaries form a large segment of both Houses. A struggle between the Executive and the Legislature is likely to come. To resolve it, Mr. Truman will need a far stronger, abler and more liberal Cabinet than he has previously selected.

The same doubts apply in a lesser degree to foreign policy. The defeat of isolationists like Senator Ball in Minnesota shows that this particular form of reaction is now dead. But throughout the campaign, Mr. Dewey had preached bi-partisan foreign policy, and Mr. Dulles had pledged himself to continue Mr. Marshall's programme. It is an open secret, however, that a bi-partisan foreign policy conducted by the Republicans would have differed very markedly from that of Mr. Marshall. The Marshall Plan would soon have been transformed into a pure rearmament plan, and Franco and de Gaulle have been granted overt American support. In the Far East, every effort would have been made to save the tottering regime of Chiang Kai-shek.

From this sort of lunacy the election results last week have probably saved us. We may hope that more reality will be given to the policy in Europe which Mr. Harriman has described as support for the non-Communist Left. And we can expect without undue optimism the continuation of E.R.P. for its full four years. But on the great issue of Russian-American relations, nothing can be said with certainty except that the Kremlin is probably as baffled by the result of the elections as Mr. Dewey.

Not the least important aspect of this momentous event is its effect on domestic politics here in Britain. November 3rd was a black day for Lord Woolton and Mr. Churchill. For a year now, they have been campaigning with the same tactics as the Republicans. They have calculated on a swing of the pendulum, and they have believed that they can defeat the Left without any constructive policy by the mere exploitation of anti-Communist hysteria and of the natural dislike for planning and control. The American election results show the danger of such calculations in a country where organised Labour is conscious of its power.

France's Unsolved Problem

In the French coalfields there are signs that the miners, hungry and sullen, are slowly drifting back to work. But, even though this strike be defeated, it is by no means sure that the Government has yet emerged from its troubles in the industrial field. Following on the recently authorised increases in the cost of bread, electricity, gas and transport services, decrees have now been issued enacting a 100 per cent. rise in the price of fats other than butter, a 48 per cent. increase in the price of sugar, and a 38 per cent. increase in the price of spaghetti. Although these and other minor increases are apparently to be offset by hoped for decreases in the cost of butter, meat and wine, the Government's claim that these price adjustments will bring about a net improvement of 6 per cent. in the purchasing power of the minimum wage, as compared with what it was before the concession of a general wage increase of 15 per cent. at the end of September, is far from convincing; and both the Socialist *Force Ouvrière* and the Catholic trade union federations are protesting no less vigorously than the Communist-led C.G.T., whose next step seems likely to be to take the lead in pressing wage demands in the metal and textile industries. Politically, the question is once more arising whether the Socialist Party is contemplating another break with the Coalition on the issue of industrial wages. The *Populaire* roundly declares: "We do not think the workers will be satisfied, and they will be right." Should the Socialist Ministers resign, and thus plunge France into yet another Cabinet crisis from which only General de Gaulle would be likely to profit, they would no doubt expose themselves to the charge of irresponsible "chopping and changing." But this is not to say that the Socialist Party is bound to acquiesce in a policy which is in fact placing on the shoulders of the working-class the whole burden of France's unsolved problem—how to enforce payment of taxes by the well-to-do and how to put a stop to the vicious spiral of hoarding and price inflation. As we see it, the correct tactics for the French Socialists are, not to resign, but to use their position in the Government to insist upon much more drastic action than has yet been taken against profiteering and tax evasion.

The T.U.C. and the Communists

The Government cannot complain of lack of whole-hearted support from the Trades Union Congress in meeting the "disruptive activities" of the Communists, against whose effects on the recovery of "Marshall Plan" Europe, Sir Stafford Cripps gave Parliament a grave warning on Monday night. At its meeting last week the T.U.C. General Council announced, in effect, that it proposed to withdraw from the World Federation of Trade Unions (it is hardly to be expected that that Communist-dominated body will agree with the T.U.C. demand that it should "suspend its functions"); and it called on the executives of all affiliated unions to "counteract every manifestation of Communist influence." In so far as those "influences" are directed, as the General Council declares they are, at increasing social misery, creating conditions of chaos and economic instability and keeping the world divided and impoverished in order to "sabotage" the recovery of Western Europe in the interests of the U.S.S.R., we have no doubt that the great bulk of British trade unionists, who have a great deal more to lose than their chains, will endorse in general terms the Council's attitude. But it by no means follows that the affiliated Unions will, or should, embark on an indiscriminate witch-hunt against "Red" officials; and groups of organised workers, such as the railwaymen and farm labourers, who have at present got wage claims under negotiation may take some convincing that officials of their union who happen to be members of the Communist Party, and are giving active support to current demands, are in fact betraying their "best interests" or "acting as the abject and slavish agents" of a foreign power. If the non-Communist trade unionists really come to believe that the activities of Communist officials are "subversive," the remedy is in their own hands: by turning up in strength at branch meetings they can decisively determine policy. We can think of no more fatal a way of destroying the discipline and coherence of organised labour in this country than to expel from its ranks, on a vague charge of "sabotage," officials whose attitude in pressing wage demands may be "militant," but whose loyalty to decisions resting on the votes of their members is not in question.

The French Four Year Plan

An interesting feature in the four-year programme submitted by the French Government to the O.E.E.C., and designed to show how (it is hoped) France will become independent of Marshall Aid by 1952-53, is the much greater emphasis thrown on agricultural production than figured in the Monnet Plan drawn up three years ago. The production targets are obviously, in the present circumstances of France, vague aspirations rather than precise estimates of what can be realised; but it is significant that steel production, in particular, is scaled down considerably below the Monnet Plan figure. On the face of it, this new conception of France's future economy should fit in suitably with the corresponding British plan, with its emphasis on industrial output and exports. There is, however, one factor which may make nonsense of such "integrated" Anglo-French economic planning. A predominantly industrialised Britain can be wedded successfully to a France which is concentrating, in the main, on raising her agricultural output, only if French farmers are prepared to deliver their produce at the right price. And that, as the internal difficulties of France now illustrate, is a problem which no post-war French Government has yet solved.

Dismantling in Germany

On the face of it, the American Government has made some concessions to French opposition to the complete termination of dismantling in Bizonia. Neither the French nor the British Government undertakes to suspend dismantling. It is, however, now agreed that the Industrial Advisory Committee of the American E.C.A. is to conduct a rapid review of all plants scheduled for dismantling in the British and French zones, and is to determine whether some or all of them "might better serve the need of European recovery than if removed and re-erected elsewhere." There is much to be said for bringing at last to an end the protracted process of dismantling on reparations account; and it is obvious that, if Western Germany is to be an asset rather than a liability to Western Union, there are limits below which its industrial potential should not be reduced. On the other hand, before accepting the view of the German politicians in Bizonia (endorsed apparently by Mr. Hoffman) that the present dismantling programme is a real obstacle to European recovery, it is as well to bear in mind that it is based on the eventual production of nearly eleven million tons of steel a year in the Western Zones and on a general level of industrial capacity equal to that of 1936, when German rearmament was in full swing. If a still greater re-deployment of German heavy industry is to be permitted, it becomes the more imperative that the industrial resources of the Ruhr should not be restored to the hands of their pre-war owners, but placed under effective international control.

Coal Output and Absenteeism

In agreeing to participate in joint attendance committees, which will interview men who habitually miss shifts without satisfactory explanations, and will warn them of the consequences, the National Union of Mineworkers has gone some way to accepting a share of responsibility for disciplining absenteeism in the coalfields. Men whose attendance does not improve are to be subject, on the recommendation of the committees, to a fine or dismissal; and, in the latter case, the Union undertakes not to countenance any support being given to the men concerned. We have no quarrel with action of this sort being taken against the irresponsible absentee; in a nationalised industry he is manifestly being guilty of anti-social action, and cannot complain if he is removed from an occupation in which he is placing an unfair burden on regular attenders and depressing the standards of his fellow workers. It must, however, be borne in mind that a great deal of absenteeism arises, not from irresponsible idleness, but from the deliberate determination of miners, in many areas, to secure on Saturdays work "on the side" which is in practice exempt from P.A.Y.E. We doubt whether this practice can be wholly overcome by the use of the disciplinary whip; and it is surprising that the N.C.B. and N.U.M. joint committee on production makes no reference in its report to the possibility of providing positive incentives—pit production bonuses or extra rations—for the performance of a full quota of shifts per week. The Committee does, however, make the sensible recommendations that every effort should be made to secure a maximum development of face-room in the pits, and to devise a speedier procedure for the up-grading from dataller to face-worker of all suitable men for whom face-room can be found. The long period in which a miner must expect to work on day wages underground before reaching a position in which personal effort is more closely correlated to earnings, certainly militates against the increased coal output which is vitally needed.

Light on the Black Country

For a long time planners, reformers and idealists have looked at the Birmingham and West Midlands area with distaste and almost disgust. It has been condemned as unwieldy, over-populated, too thick with industry to be safe in wartime. The Board of Trade has cajoled and induced Birmingham industrialists to take their work, particularly when extensions of premises are contemplated, to South Wales or other development areas. Talk of new towns and depopulation of the region was in the air. Now Professor Sir Patrick Abercrombie and Mr. Herbert Jackson have issued, on behalf of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, a 750,000 word reprieve for the Midlands. "The conurbation, particularly the West Midlands one, is the industrial machine *par excellence,*" they write. The region probably produces more exports than any other area in Great Britain. Large towns are necessary for a large diversity in industry. It would be senseless to attempt a far-flung redistribution of Birmingham and the neighbouring towns, when what made the district so vital to our economy was the fact that it *was* Birmingham and neighbouring towns, complementing one another, that produced a sound economic pattern. The defects lie in the way in which the towns themselves have evolved, unplanned, into dark monstrosities. Cultural life has been destroyed by the move of the well-to-do classes to the fringe. Re-deployment is needed within the region, not mass emigration from it. The town centres want rejuvenating; communities in danger of decaying, or which are already defunct, need reviving; the urban sprawl must be halted. Better roadways, greater cultural facilities resting in part on Stratford, Warwick, Leamington, and Malvern ought to be provided. The plan exudes ideas of this sort and many others. Their most notable feature is their practicality—unlike the projects devised in most such plans they are capable of fulfilment within a measurable period and are related to the economic circumstances of the present, not to a forecast of the future. Perhaps the biggest shock to the advocates of dispersal will be the contention that the population of the area (now 3,400,000) should not be diminished, but increased by nearly 400,000, within fourteen years. All the towns would not, of course, be left at today's size, but some would drop in population and others gain.

PARLIAMENT : Nationalisation Knock-up

Wednesday

For days, the Tory commentators had been telling the Government what Hudson would do when he got at them. He was going to be *very* ferocious, even by his own standards. No wonder then that, when he trundled into the arena, the Government benches fell quiet. But, having arrived, Hudson sat down, and began to smell the flowers. He didn't want to fight. After conceding, to the general surprise, that there was a good deal to be said for some State intervention in industry, he trundled off smiling, followed by the scowls of his backers.

Dalton's reply to this half-hearted attack on nationalisation was addressed less to Hudson than to the judgment of those who in 1945 voted for it. Undisturbed by barracking ("The Noble Lord grins, but can't contradict me," he said to Lord Hinchinbroke, leaving him with a grin that had outlived its usefulness), Dalton not only defended nationalisation, case by case, but argued for more. His speech drove out the last traces of Coalition fug that had thickened in the Chamber during recent years.

While Labour reasserts its purpose, the Opposition finds new affiliates in resisting Socialism. Salter, an Independent who, as he avowed, at one time used to vote with the Labour Party and now usually votes against it, made a dismal, nagging attack on the Government's domestic policy from the Opposition despatch-box. Salter's discursive method became steadily more dreary until Government supporters began to interrupt. "Take your medicine," Churchill snapped; and smiled. With the quality of Salter's speech thus established, the House relaxed into benevolence.

The Tories' latest fellow-traveller is, of course, Ivor Thomas who, having crossed the floor, must now look his old comrades in the face. Few of them would reproach him for going; but even fewer would approve of the way he went. Leslie Hale, in a speech of classical eloquence, said goodbye to Thomas with the suggestion that he had bitten the hand that hadn't fed him enough.

In certain respects, the Debate on the King's Speech has done a service in reviving the Parliamentary tradition of antique allusion. Does Hale want to describe his sentiments towards the Thomas affair? He refers to the reluctant distaste of Macaulay in approaching the poems of Mr. Robert Montgomery. Does Eccles want to describe Anglo-Russian Trade? He speaks of Ivan the Terrible's abortive wooing of Queen Elizabeth, only to be told by Strachey—before his welcome food announcements—that out of it came the prosperous Muscovy Company. As for Sir William Darling, when he describes why a contented capitalist (himself) will not go back to "the sterile world of clerks and inkwells" from which he, an ex-Socialist, had come, he recalls the failure of Peter the Hermit to recruit a knight who begged to be excused from a Crusade to the Holy Land, on the grounds that he had been there.

These mellow reflections of a nineteenth-century business-man have little in common with Gammans' bitter abuse and Astor's inconsequential apprehensions. Through the speeches of both appeared a panic-stricken sense of insecurity. After much cogitation, Astor had come to the unwilling conclusion that after all, the Prime Minister was a Socialist, since under his leadership a Socialist programme had been carried out.

Perhaps the most curious anti-Government argument of the day was "dug up"—to use his own expression—by Sir David Robertson. Before the First World War, the *Daily Citizen*, a Labour paper, had leading Socialists on its Board. After a short life, it collapsed. It refused horse racing news, and canvassed, instead, the Nonconformist Bethels for circulation. *Ergo*, Labour Ministers cannot manage nationalised undertakings. When Warbey asked how many privately owned newspapers have failed in the last forty years, Robertson took a drink of water, and asked for notice of the question.

Michael Foot and Richard Acland, among the best speakers on Tuesday, said, "Look!" and pointed to Labour Britain as an example of social and industrious calm in the surrounding turbulence, of progress which Mr. Hoffman could not help but commend. That is what the Tories now seek to destroy.

MAURICE EDELMAN

COMMUNIST VICTORY IN CHINA

The fall of Mukden marks a decisive turn in the war in China. Its repercussions will be felt not only in China but throughout South-East Asia, as well as in Washington and in Moscow. Chiang Kai-shek, who calls China the "decisive pivot" in the Communist policy of world revolution, has declared, in an interview given to a correspondent of the *New York Herald-Tribune,* that the Communists work on the principle that "in order to control the world it is essential to control Asia, and that in order to control Asia it is essential to control China." Hence, "to spare mankind the catastrophe of a Third World War, it is particularly necessary to come to Asia's rescue," and "the centre of endeavour in the salvation of Asia must be China."

The logic of this statement would be more effective if Chiang Kai-shek had not already received millions of U.S. dollars, munitions, military advisers and aircraft since the end of the war. The more help America has given, the more corrupt Kuomintang China has become; the greater the number of desertions from its army. The American assumption—and this applies to Republicans and Democrats alike—has been that the dollar could defeat Communism. Kuomintang leaders naturally foster this illusion. The Chinese Foreign Minister, Dr. Wang Shih-chieh, on the eve of his arrival in London last week to discuss Anglo-Chinese relations with Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin, delivered a masterpiece of wish-fulfilment in his statement about trade with China and the ability of his Government to check the lengthening spiral of inflation. Whilst he was in London, China's currency was rocketing once again, and people in Nanking were already discussing the evacuation of Dr. Wang's Government.

In his statement to the Kuomintang Central Political Council on Monday Chiang Kai-shek argued that the fall of Mukden does not put the Communists "in a position to bring North China under their menace." Who is to stand in their way? Scarcely the armies of the Kuomintang. The bravest general cannot win battles if his men, sullen and half-starved by the most corrupt of regimes, see no reason to risk their lives. The U.S. Army authorities in Nanking have announced that a new American military advisory group has been set up. Headed by General Barr, chief of the Army Division, it will presumably try to stop the rot in the Kuomintang armies. But if Chiang Kai-shek has lost all but a handful of the 39 first-line divisions which were trained and equipped by the United States during and since the last years of the war against Japan, where will he find the trained men to withstand the Communist avalanche which may now flow over North China and then spread over Central China? Mr. William Bullitt may soon arrive in Nanking to investigate China's military needs, and a large shipment of arms may shortly leave West Coast ports in American cargo ships, but —to quote the *New York Herald-Tribune*—"even if American resources were ten times what they are, they still could not save China unless China can somehow develop the internal strength and leadership to save herself."

What new leadership is possible for Southern China while Chiang Kai-shek clings to the Presidency? The Prime Minister, who had a reputation for honesty, has just resigned, in company with the Finance Minister, because his efforts to save China from catastrophic inflation have been defeated by the fantastic military expenditure in Manchuria. Nanking is full of rumours of a total change in the regime; some suggest a new Government, excluding Chiang Kai-shek. Right-wing Kuomintang leaders, still gambling on all American aid short of war, may hope to consolidate a Government in South China. U.S. military advisers, blueprinting a war against the Soviet Union, may still stick pins into imaginary, as well as actual, bases in South China and in South Korea. But the Communists and Left-wing Democrats are not likely to let the grass grow under their feet. Already a provisional Government has been set up in the North, and the first published list of its members shows that it has the support of Chinese intellectuals with a distinguished record of political struggle. Further, it is reported that a group of political leaders from Hongkong—Communists and Democratic League members—have already left for an unknown destination in the North. This may mean the formation of a Government in North China supported by at least as many Chinese as still give their allegiance to Nanking.

The crucial question is whether the Chinese Communists, whose hold in Northern China has from the outset been based on a domestic policy of land reform peculiarly suited to local conditions, will now be forced by Moscow into an external policy of antagonism to the whole Western world. Mao Tse-tung has recently contributed to the Cominform journal and the Chinese Communists have denounced Tito's "deviation." Nevertheless, China is a vast country with its own highly individual and exclusive tradition, and it would be premature and foolish to take for granted that Communist China is to be a mere adjunct of the Soviet Union. In spite of General Marshall's exposure of the futility of supporting the Chiang Kai-shek regime, the United States has earned widespread unpopularity in China by intervention on the Kuomintang side. But Britain may still have a chance of maintaining good relations with those democratic leaders who, in the circumstances of China to-day, have no alternative but to co-operate with the Communists.

A GOOD BILL

The Steel Bill is a good Bill—about as good as, in the circumstances, it could have been. Its opponents, who would be attacking it with equal fury whatever it had contained, are now busy denouncing it on the ground that, since it leaves in being the firms that are being taken over, with their present managements and directors, it can do nothing to improve the efficiency of the steel industry from the national standpoint. If the Bill had proposed to fuse all the acquired firms into one gigantic enterprise, or even into a number of lesser regional giants, to depose the present directors, and to replace the existing managements, these same people would now be denouncing it as setting up a dangerous and top-heavy bureaucracy, and as handing over the industry to a body of incompetent and politically biased tools of Socialist doctrinairism. All this is natural enough; monopoly capitalism, placed on the defensive, will inevitably use whatever arguments come readiest to its hands. If it cannot have things one way, it will have them another. The Bill's opponents are hostile to nationalisation, in any form; and accordingly, any Bill is bound, from their standpoint, to be a bad Bill.

There will be plenty of opportunities, in the struggle that lies ahead, for re-stating the basic arguments in favour of converting the main sections of the iron and steel industry from a private into a public monopoly; and the case for doing this has already been put with force in several publications* from the Labour side. We do not propose, at this stage, to go over these fundamental arguments again, or to rehearse the sins of the British steel industry between the wars, or the reasons for holding that an industry so prone to restrictive monopoly practices and so vital to exports and to home capital re-equipment cannot safely be left in private hands. One comment of a general nature is apposite. Apart from the dangers of American capitalist penetration of a privately owned British steel industry, with resultant difficulties in the way of our freedom to nationalise it, our commitment to co-operate in a general recovery plan for Western Europe makes it imperative that steel production should be subject to State control. But we are concerned in this article principally with the Bill and with the merits of the particular methods of nationalisation proposed in it.

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* *Why Nationalise Steel?* By G. D. H. Cole (NEW STATESMAN & NATION, 2s.); *Steel is Power*, G. W. Fienburgh and R. Evely (Gollancz, 3s. 6d.); *Britain's Steel at Britain's Service* (Labour Party, 2d.).

First, then, for the area covered by the Bill. This, in our view, is about right; it is, indeed, pretty much the area we argued for last week, and the area Professor Cole argued for in his pamphlet which we published in the spring. It includes the basic processes of production, from the iron mine to the steel ingot and the hot-rolled product, *plus* such other branches of the semi-finishing and finishing processes as are so tied up with these basic processes, either technically or through financial integration, or in both ways, as to be practically inseparable from them. It leaves out as much as possible of the finishing trades and of those semi-finishing trades that are closely connected with engineering or with other industries. Moreover, it takes the sensible line of excluding altogether the small producers, mostly specialists, and of allowing the specialist firms of suitable size to continue to produce under licence side by side and in competition with the public enterprises covered by the nationalisation plan. This is not doctrinaire Socialism, but sound common sense. It will effectively destroy private monopoly, while keeping both the private and the public enterprises on their toes by allowing competition in those fields in which it can exist without crippling technical progress and effective rationalisation and re-equipment.

The decision both to take over firms as such, rather than processes as such, and to leave the firms taken over in existence as autonomous units, subject only to general control of policy by the new Steel Corporation, is also undoubtedly good sense. This is so, not because these units are satisfactory as they stand, but because the high demand for steel and the shortage of new capital equipment that is bound to exist for some time to come absolutely preclude the scrapping of much existing plant, even when it is below current standards of efficiency. This obsolescent plant, or at least much of it, has to be kept in operation; and this largely involves keeping the existing forms of integration and inter-relation of processes even when they are not the best. The job of re-equipping and re-allocating the industry, and therewith of re-shuffling the units of management and control, will have to be spread over many years—though it needs doing as quickly as it can be done in face of other claims on man-power and other resources. Accordingly, in the earlier stages it will be a matter more of building new plant than of scrapping old; and the sorting out of plant into better units will be a gradual business. While it is going on, the existing firms must continue as units, in order that production may be increased steadily, instead of falling while the reorganisation is being carried out. The shape of the industry, as it has been established under the Control Board, must be modified bit by bit, in accordance with a comprehensive long-term plan; and this plan must be put into effect without any dislocation while it is being applied.

For the same considerations it is also probably wise to leave undisturbed for the present not only the managements of the various firms, but also the boards of directors, while giving power to the Minister to make any changes he may think fit. The directors of the steel companies no doubt include a good many men who are not capable of making any valuable contribution to the industry as a public service; but they also include many who have high administrative or technical competence—men whose services the State, if they are prepared to serve it, can ill afford to lose. It is much better to weed out the duds gradually than, in making a holocaust, to risk the loss of good men whose hearts are in the industry rather than in profit-seeking irrespective of the public interest. Under the Bill's plan, the directors and managements will be responsible, not to shareholders, but to the public. The *policy* they are to follow will be prescribed to them by the Corporation; they will be concerned with means and not with ends. That there may be friction, accompanied by resignations, is to be expected; but the line taken in the Bill appears to involve fewer dangers than any alternative that was open.

To criticise the Bill on the ground that it does not set out any concrete plan of reorganisation is inapposite. A Bill is not the place for a complicated technical scheme which must be kept flexible and continually modified in the light of events. Nor, at this stage, can any comprehensive plan be made in more than the barest outline. The plan made two years ago by the industry itself was for the most part sound as far as it went, though it did not go, in our view, nearly far enough. It needs modifying, where it was concerned too much in terms of a balance of interests among the leading firms in the cartel; and it needs expanding, to provide for a larger total output. But there is no case for demolishing it, or for starting again from scratch. The main difference is that it can now be scaled up, and that the capital required for its execution can be applied where it is most needed, and not, as hitherto, in accordance with the varying powers of the different firms to raise money on the capital market. That is a great gain; for under private ownership the capital needed could neither have been raised without a State guarantee, nor so distributed among firms as to yield the largest possible improvements in efficiency and to ensure a right technical balance of investment.

Finally, the Bill is being attacked on the ground that the proposed terms of compensation are unfair to the shareholders. What this amounts to is a demand that the owners of steel shares shall be allowed to receive the full benefit of the State's policy of maintaining full employment—a policy which converts highly speculative investments in an industry liable hitherto to extreme fluctuations into relatively secure regular income-earning assets. Clearly no such claim ought to be admitted, especially at a time when the atmosphere of re-armament is highly favourable to the inflation of steel-market values in this particular field. The proposed basis of compensation, which gives the shareholders the advantage of 1945 or 1948 stock-market values (whichever are the higher) is fully as generous as they have any right to expect—if not more.

On every salient point Mr. Strauss's Bill comes well out of an examination of its merits. In a brief article many aspects of it are bound to be left untouched; but we believe we have picked out most of the issues on which it needs to be judged. It is, we repeat, a good Bill.

JEWS AND HORSES

Twice last week the case of the three German Generals to be tried for war crimes by a British Court was raised in the House of Commons. On both occasions the feeling of the House was clearly hostile to the Government's decision. Mr. Paget expressed a widespread Socialist sentiment when he said: "This trial offends every sense of good taste in this country. It has really roused the people to a sense of indecency." General Jeffreys spoke for his fellow Tories when he stated: "After all, these men were, as far as we know, honourable opponents of this country . . . We ought to look at any evidence with very great doubts which comes from other countries with a less high standard of honour or truthfulness."

Before we jump to the conclusion that the Cabinet is wrong in its determination to go ahead with this trial, it is as well to study some of the facts. There is no question—as the Government has now frankly admitted—that a quite indefensible delay has taken place in bringing these men to trial. Apparently that delay was chiefly due to the successfully obstructive tactics of the Generals' well-wishers in the War Office. It should not have been tolerated. So far, indignation against the Government is well-founded.

But those who staged the demonstration in the House were not content with protesting against delay. Mr. Paget seemed to be opposed to any trial; others to a trial three years after the war; and others to a trial at a time when we need the good-will of the German people. Mr. Churchill, for instance, linked the trials with the issue of dismantling, confused them with de-Nazification, and then took the prosecution of Baron Weisacker as an example of the "deadly error" which we are committing. Baron Weisacker was head of the Nazi Foreign Office until 1943. The American prosecution has documents to prove that his "Number Two," Dr. Luther, took an active part at the notorious conference in 1942 when it was decided to exterminate the Jews. Another Foreign Office document records "frictionless co-operation" between the Foreign Office and Eichmann, the S.S. leader in charge of the gas chambers. In March, 1942, Weisacker granted Eichmann permission to deport 6,000 French Jews to Auschwitz. A few weeks later he sent a note to Tiso, the Prime Minister of Slovakia, acknowledging receipt of 52,000 Jews and demanding that the remaining 35,000, "held back under clerical influences," should be handed over forthwith.

These are the documented charges; yet Mr. Churchill called it a deadly error even to prosecute Baron Weisacker. He went on to deplore "the harsh and wrongful procedure which the Foreign Secretary has authorised towards the aged German Generals," and a moment or two later added these highly significant words:

> There may be some exceptional cases such as the slaughter of the men of the Norfolk Regiment, which was the subject of a trial in Hamburg last week. This it was right to pursue, as one would pursue a common case of murder, even after fifteen years have passed before it came to light.

Here we come to the root of the matter. If a British soldier is done to death by a junior S.S. officer, that S.S. man shall hang by the neck even if it takes fifteen years to hunt him down. But three years after the attempted extermination of whole peoples in Eastern Europe, nothing shall be done to a German General even if he can be shown to have actively collaborated in genocide. The individual murder of one Englishman is a crime to be tried by a British court, but not the use of gas chambers to kill millions of Jews and gypsies and Slavs.

Apparently there are plenty of intelligent people who share Mr. Churchill's view. In the debate, Brigadier Head stated: "We all know they may have done very bad things in the past. But they were ordered by politicians to do them, and there is not a single person in a high responsible position in the armed forces of any country at the present time who would not do the same thing." I wonder if Brigadier Head has troubled to read the press summaries of the judgment handed down last week by the American War Crimes Court at Nuremberg. In this trial three Field-Marshals, nine Generals and an Admiral were indicted, and the Court acquitted them all, rightly enough, of "crimes against the peace" on the ground that they were below the policy level. It then acquitted two of all other charges, but sentenced the others to various terms of imprisonment. General von Kuechler was sentenced to twenty years. General Hermann Reinecker got a life sentence for "criminal segregation of prisoners of war for liquidation."

It would be improper to discuss at present the guilt or innocence of the three Generals to be tried in the British Court. But they all served on the Eastern Front; and it can therefore be said that a *prima facie* case exists against them at least as strong as that made by the American prosecutor against the thirteen men who were tried at Nuremberg. On the Eastern Front, Einsatz Commandos of the S.S. were used behind the lines for mass extermination. Some Generals, for instance Halder, resisted this at real personal risk; some acquiesced feebly; some enthusiastically accepted the Nazi doctrine and carried it out. One of the counts against Rundstedt is an order which he issued forbidding his soldiers to photograph extermination squads when they were on the job. Such an order indicates a willingness to assist the S.S. very actively in their aims.

Granted that the British trial should have taken place months ago—and would have done so without War Office obstruction—it is difficult to see that this is sufficient ground for quashing the trial altogether. It may be, as Mr. Paget suggested, that we need to consider the sentiments of the German people on grounds of political expediency. But is the price to be paid for winning German goodwill the tacit admission of the German view that, while war against Western peoples should be conducted honourably, Jews and Slavs do not deserve such consideration? A few hours after Mr. Churchill had made his plea for the German Generals, Mr. Sutcliffe appealed to his fellow Members against another form of mass-slaughter.

> The vast majority of these horses are young ones in the prime of life, perfectly healthy and with many years of useful service before them. In fact, they represent some of the finest types of British horses of all kinds . . . in a number of cases they even include mares with their foals.
>
> In some of these towns it is a melancholy procession to the slaughter-house.

Substitute "Jew" for "horses," and you have the substance of the crime which Mr. Churchill and other Members of the House regard it as "harsh and wrongful" to prosecute—three years after it was perpetrated. R. H. S. Crossman

A LONDON DIARY

A lovely smell of scandal has been oozing from Whitehall. Conservative headquarters inhale it with all the joy of Bisto Kids. No one knows how much electoral food will come their way. In any case, it is good to have the assurance that the investigation is to be thorough and relentless. The Labour Party has stood as the party opposed to private gain, and its standard in office must be higher than that of other parties. It cannot afford to permit some types of dishonesty which have been common enough under Tory rule. In days of controls and shortages, it is, of course, true that the incentive to various forms of small or greater dishonesty is more severe than in the past. It takes a Minister with a sharp eye and business knowledge to make sure that no irregularities take place in his Department. It is partly for this reason that the Tories have been able deliberately to smear the reputations of some Ministers who, as they well know, are completely beyond reproach. All the more reason now that Scotland Yard should sort out the frivolous and insubstantial charges which, I am told, have been arriving by every post, from serious irregularities which we must assume have occurred. Labour has everything to gain from a ruthless investigation which on the highest authority should end malicious rumours, while it exposes and punishes any real acts of dishonesty.

* * *

Stalin's interview with a *Pravda* correspondent last week was summarily dismissed by most of the press as just another piece of Russian political warfare. This seems to me to be an underestimate of its importance. At the very least it revealed that Mr. Bramuglia had worked out two draft resolutions for the Security Council. To one of them he got Mr. Vyshinsky's agreement, and to the other that of the Western Powers. The difference was narrowed down to a single point. Should the blockade be raised before the detailed financial arrangements for the introduction of the East Mark had been agreed, or only when agreement had been reached? The Western Powers stood for "before" and Mr. Vyshinsky for "when." Stalin, of course, was wrong in asserting that the Western Powers "disrupt agreements already reached." The distrust is now so deep on both sides that when one becomes for some reason more amenable, and makes what he considers a genuine concession, the other immediately denounces an obvious propaganda trick. Under such conditions it is futile to ask whether either really wanted an agreement. Both really wanted one; and then again, both really feared the consequences. It may be that the Russians are now in the mood to retire into a vindictive isolationism. If so, the stage could very easily be set for the agreement to disagree—a phrase that has now found its way into *The Times* editorial columns. This too may become a mere slogan unless it is precisely and locally defined. It must be applied, for instance, to Greece and China.

* * *

The *Daily Worker* ("the only newspaper owned by its readers") has now acquired new premises and the size and format of a conventional capitalist newspaper. Apart from the family news of its own enlargement and of the torchlight demonstration (25,000 are claimed) which welcomed the New Look, the only item which distinguished the first number was an article by Professor Haldane on the Lysenko controversy. A reference to his dilemma as a Communist and also one of the world's leading geneticists appeared in this Diary some weeks ago. It was followed by correspondence in this journal and by a statement by A. J. Cummings in the *News Chronicle* to which Professor Haldane now replies. Refuting Mr. Cummings' statement that, if he disagreed with the Soviet biologist, the *Worker* would not allow him to publish his views, he proceeds to demonstrate that it would. The result will, however, only impress the faithful. He omits the real issue—the purge of the Soviet geneticists and the denunciation by Lysenko and his academic claque of the school of Mendelian genetics to which J. B. S. himself belongs—on the ground that he has not yet read the full 500 pages of the Soviet account. He allows himself only the mild heresy of questioning Lysenko's theory that conflict does not occur in nature between individuals of the same species. He deals with this self-evident nonsense more in sorrow than in anger, and then says: "See! The *Worker* has published this and I haven't been expelled from the Communist Party!" Not a word about Lysenko's speech to the Academy of Agriculture in which he denounced the kind of science which Haldane preaches as "reactionary," "absurd," and "utterly alien to the world outlook of the Soviet people," and so forth. That same night, Eric Ashby, the Professor of Botany at Manchester, who was scientific officer for the Commonwealth in Moscow, "took Lysenko to pieces" on the Third Programme. His documented case of the way in which Lysenko and his politicos and scientific pistolleros have crushed their opponents and erected their own genetics makes Haldane's by-play look pathetic. Galileo, in the Dark Ages, recanted and denied his scientific proofs at the behest of his religion. Communist scientists are facing the same challenge.

* * *

Acquitted at Nuremberg, and acquitted two years later by the German de-Nazification Court at Stuttgart, the irrepressible Dr. Schacht has now restored his fallen financial position by becoming, at 75, the author of a best seller, *Abrechnung Mit Hitler* ("Settling Account with Hitler"). The picture of the man which emerges from its pages is of an unrepentant, self-assured and righteously indignant expert whose main complaint against the Führer is that he was a reckless amateur who ruined everything by "overdoing" it. In his view, the *coup* which he planned with General Witzleben in September, 1938, was the only competently organised attempt of its kind (Schacht has no use at all for the conspiracy of July 20, 1944.) If it failed, the responsibility must be shared by Chamberlain and Daladier, the *Wehrmacht*, the German Church, liberal bourgeoisie and workers alike. As it was, it was impossible to "arrest the avalanche," and the German people must not be saddled with blame for Hitler's misdeeds. As for developments since the war, the "guilty men" are those British and American theorists who failed to appreciate that monarchist traditionalism is innate in the German people, and talked a lot of nonsense about democracy to a people which was hungry, cold and without houses because the Allies would not realise that Germany must be given a chance to live. "We shall never allow the Allies to rob us of our conviction that our sacrifice had a meaning and a significance." Agreeable words for Dr. Schacht's German readers. Indeed, there is no doubt that Hitler's "financial wizard" is trying, even at 75, to stage a political come-back. For, with an eye evidently on the prospective Government at Bonn (not to mention General Clay), he proclaims boldly that he knows "the solution" for the economic problems following the initial step taken in the currency reform. His view, I am sure, is shared by several distinguished de-Nazified capitalists who again hold key positions in Western Germany.

* * *

A friend who has been eight months in the R.A.F. tells me that, since his first two months of hard training, he has had nothing whatever to do. Work, he says, is often simply invented. He cites from his own experience examples of such silly and humiliating "fatigues" as men being set to paint lavatory seats and then, when the paint is dry, having to scrape them with a razor blade and repaint with another colour! This story reached me when I was reading a long letter with the usual complaints about conditions in the Air Force. First, says my correspondent, the posting system often means what seems to the airman unnecessary separation from wives and families. Constant changes of camp also mean that men do not get the chance of "belonging" and getting to know local residents. The pay seems fairly good, but if a man has to spend up to £1 a week, or even more, on visits to his home, he doesn't have much left out of a wage of between £2 and £4. Then there are a lot of complaints about living quarters, some of which, such as the lack of adequate lights in barrack rooms, surely could be easily remedied. Others would involve expensive rebuilding, which will become increasingly possible as the demands of civilian housing become less pressing. My correspondent adds that the vocational scheme, which began so well after the war, has been allowed to "run down," and that the cultural activities which were such a feature of the wartime R.A.F. have simply lapsed. No longer are there music circles, debates, discussion groups, play-readings and so forth. On this point, I am not sure that the authorities are alone to blame. I recall Air Force camps during the war, where social and intellectual activities fairly hummed. They were encouraged, of course, by the authorities, and a constant stream of speakers, many of them practised in the art of conducting debates and discussion groups, were ready as volunteers to help. But in every case where there was real intellectual life in a camp, I think there were one or two airmen who were themselves keen on organising group life. If that is so, the answer to my correspondent on this score must be that he and others who feel like him, and who do not wish, as he says, to spend their time reading picture papers and *No Orchids for Miss Blandish,* must get a move on themselves and stir up the authorities to support them.

* * *

Many industrialists will be sorry to see that Mr. Frank Chappell has resigned his post as the head of the Board of Trade Production Efficiency Service. His job was to advise firms on better production methods that would lead to greater output. The idea that a civil servant can give practical advice is incomprehensible to many managements. But it was an idea they had to accept when Mr. Chappell, an ex-trade union organiser and supervisor, arrived on the shop floor and started to point out in blunt language defects of organisation and layout. Indirectly he must have earned a good deal of respect for Government Departments from managers and technicians. He has done much to make people aware that higher output can be obtained in other ways than by longer hours and harder work. But in the end the characteristics which made him an asset to industry and his Department have prevented him from remaining at the Board of Trade. It is difficult to fit into the Civil Service unless you share its love of tidy organisation. Mr. Chappell had painfully built up a staff of experts under central control and readily transferable from one part of the country to another. This did not accord with the Board of Trade's notion of regional organisation, which demanded that they be split up into twos and threes under the command of Regional Controllers. A first year's work on this pattern showed an all-round loss of effectiveness. Mr. Chappell presented an ultimatum: if central control was not re-established he would resign. Unfortunately his unconventionality led him to give the terms of his ultimatum to the press, and I suppose that the Government can hardly be blamed for not accepting it. Nevertheless, Mr. Wilson would be well advised to see that the service which he operates in order to preach efficiency to others is self-efficient.

* * *

Strutton Ground, off Victoria Street, is a normal street market; but it has one peculiarity. Halfway down it on the right is a large blitzed site, and it is here that Black Marketeers display their goods. Some of them lay them out on sacks about twenty feet back from the street, while others hold them enticingly half concealed in the air. Whenever I go past, I see the sober housewives of Westminster standing on the pavement rather self-consciously, while the hucksters tempt them with their wares. "Come a little nearer, ladies," they simper, and sooner or later a bold adventuress steps off the pavement into the Black Market. It is a delicious sensation to stand there wondering what forbidden fruit can be plucked in this derelict Garden of Eden. But up till the other day I had never plucked up the courage to take the fatal step off the pavement. That morning I saw someone selling a paper and I felt that at last I could enter the market with a good conscience. I paid my penny and found myself walking up Victoria Street reading a copy of the *Spivs' Gazette*.

CRITIC

DECLARATION OF SEMI-INDEPENDENCE

(By the British Jefferson.)

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created Socialists; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable perks; that among these are votes, football pools and the pursuit of social security. That, to secure these perks, governments are elected among men, deriving discretionary powers from the consent of the governed, or at least some of them; that, whenever untoward events jeopardize these perks, it is the right of the civil service to give earnest consideration to the modification of these principles in the light of such events; and, when a long train of alarms and adversities reduces their investments and threatens the rate for the job per man per stint, it is their duty to pool their sovereignty and currency with the direct object of spreading the intra-European subsistence level.

Such is now the necessity which constrains this Kingdom to invite an absolute supervision over this State and this people by the United States of America; and to justify this acceptance, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

The President of the United States has declared us in his protection.

He has given his assent to charters the most wholesome and necessary for the universal good.

He has called together deliberative bodies at places unusual and uncomfortable but convenient to the greatest number of participating nations.

He has erected multitudes of new offices and sent hither swarms of officers to assist our people and increase their substance.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution but compatible with the general weal.

He has regulated our commerce with all parts of the world.

He has granted loans and allocations wherewith to continue our domestic legislation for prosperity.

He has quartered large bodies of armed troops among us for our defence.

We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which makes us obliged to our great neighbour above the rest of mankind.

We, nevertheless, the representatives of the United Kingdom in general parliament assembled do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of this Kingdom, solemnly publish and declare that the Kingdom is, and of right ought to be, a semi-independent State.

And, as a semi-independent State, it has by no means curtailed its power to levy taxes, contract debts, conduct administration, set up Tribunals, investigate scandals, go to the dogs, buy in bulk, engage in bi-lateral barter, nationalise steel, and do all other acts and things which semi-independent States may of right do.

And to the support of this declaration, we pledge our labour, our political fortunes, and our sterling honour.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Four 2 cwt. turtles, which will make soup for the Lord Mayor's banquet on November 11, were each given six oysters and a bottle of champagne (Cordon Rouge 1927) when they reached London by plane from Trinidad last night.

"The champagne warms the turtles and cheers them," said Mr. John Lusty, of the firm which will make the soup.—*Daily Express.* (H. P. Anderson.)

Wanted, young dog, bull type, gentle with children, but good guard; Christian home.—Advt. in *Reading Mercury.* (E. W. Foster.)

Fuel economy pamphlets at Hornsey are to be printed in green, instead of red so that they shall not be mistaken for Communist Party propaganda.—*Evening News.* (M. R. Hewson.)

"There seems to be many young men deliberately trying to cause an accident by walking in front of motor cars," was the startling statement made by Mrs. —, at a meeting of the Home Safety Committee of the Edinburgh Accident Prevention Council.

She thought that certain political elements had received orders to indulge in such behaviour on the roads.—*Bulletin.* (Billy.)

OUR OLDEST ALLY

(*From a Correspondent.*)

It is significant that Senator Gurney, after leaving Madrid, paid an official visit to Lisbon on his way home. Now that Franco is being assiduously groomed for his admittance into Western Union, what is the position of the other Iberian dictator, Salazar? Articles have been appearing lately in several periodicals explaining that Salazar, though admittedly a despot, is an exceptionally benevolent one, and that his régime is the best that could be hoped for in Portugal at the present time. There have even been suggestions that Salazar himself is a democrat, and that it is his reactionary subordinates who are responsible for the totalitarian system. A glance at his *Doctrine and Action* (which is largely plagiarised from Mussolini) shows the falsity of these ideas.

About Salazar himself the foreign visitor learns next to nothing. For one thing he is retiring and ascetic almost to the point of monasticism; for another, few Portuguese dare criticise him directly. Unique among dictators, he seldom appears in public (and never in uniform) and rarely speaks on the wireless.

Any political conversation with a Portuguese (which must of course be held in private) runs to a curious dual pattern. One's companion begins by declaring emphatically that he, personally, is an enthusisatic supporter of Salazar, who is a great man, not a politician but a fervent patriot and idealist. His subordinates, however, are untrustworthy, corrupt and a constant source of anxiety to him. This, the official limit of criticism, is repeated by everybody to the point of monotony; but, concurrently, one finds oneself learning that Salazar is a reactionary and a religious fanatic, that beneath the surface conditions are identical with those in pre-war Germany and Italy, that spies are everywhere and "Portugal is a swamp" (quotation). Apparently there is only one concentration camp in the country . . . the majority of political prisoners are sent to the Ilha do Sal in the Cape Verde archipelago to work in the salt mines. The work is said to cause total blindness in one year and death within three, but as those who go there are never heard of again, the report may be untrue.

One evening I was talking to a very charming Portuguese, a middle-aged retired lawyer who confessed that he was a liberal and who was, as usual, praising Salazar in one breath and softly damning him with the next. When we met the next day he was late for our appointment and seemed excited and distressed. I asked him what was the matter. He told me that he had just been to see the wife of one of his friends to tell her that her husband had been taken away by the police. Where? Nobody knows. Why? Because he is (or was) a Radical.

To those who imagine that the present system of government in Portugal is a firm but gentle Church-and-State Conservatism, I would say that in fact it is a quiet, but virulent Fascism. There is no hysteria as in Spain, no aggressive militarism, none of the flamboyant trappings of Mussolini's regime, but there is a Gestapo, a strictly controlled press and radio, and a ruthless exploitation of the working man. Portugal, like Spain, has practically no middle-class. A man owns either a Packard or a mule cart. For the rich it is a land flowing with imported milk and honey. Everything is obtainable and luxury living is far cheaper than in other European countries. For the poor, a few essentials are sold at Government-pegged prices, but life is incessantly hard, with no prospect of any change for the worker or his children.

All Trade Union organisations are, of course, illegal. Medical services are beyond the poor's reach. One man showed me his five-year-old daughter who had an ulcerated gash four inches long on her face—this would never be cured, he said, and she was slowly dying. When I told him that in England the child would be treated for nothing he shook his head in amazement.

To obtain technical or professional education the student must have completed the seven-year course of the "liceu" (high school). To enter a liceu he must have attended a "primaria" (elementary school). These schools are State-run, Church sponsored, and cost nothing to those who are too poor to pay. In point of fact, if a working man can spare his son from the fields and wishes to send him to a school but can pay nothing, he is told that the child is too young and that he must apply again next year. He does so, and is then told that the child, being too old, cannot be admitted. This accounts in part for Portugal's 40 per cent. illiteracy (1947 figures). Thus, not only do the peasants live in penury, but their children are effectively prevented from receiving any education. The only way in which a working-class youth can try to improve his conditions is by going to the city and joining the vast floating army of Spivs. I was amazed by the number of apparently rich young men who wander slowly around central Lisbon in American-style clothes, talking in groups or eating expensive cakes at the pavement cafés, until I was told by an inhabitant that, in most cases, the luxurious suit was the only suit and the coffee and cakes left no money for more substantial food. These men haunt the chic cafés on the Rossio and Chiado, Lisbon's West-end, in the constant hope of overhearing some titbit of government or business corruption which they can turn to their own profit. And sometimes they are lucky.

Salazar is generally quoted as having done two great things for his country. He has built roads and stopped revolutions. The roads are excellent and still improving. They are of great use to the owner-classes who can afford to travel and whose commercial projects benefit from a better transport system. The men who build the roads are not so enthusiastic. Almost every year before 1924, when Carmona and Salazar seized control, revolutions occurred involving a great deal of noise and very little bloodshed as one military faction displaced another. The power of the Church and the conditions of the workers in the fields and vineyards remained unaltered. At the moment it is difficult to see a workable alternative to Salazar's vertically-organised, Gestapo-controlled *Estado Novo,* as the opposition is unarmed, divided against itself and as open to corruption as is the Government. But this Fascist regime is by definition reactionary and immutable; and even a return to the instability of the old days, bad as it was, might conceivably give the people of Portugal some hope. At the moment there is none.

SOCIALIST STOCKTAKING

III—PLANNING AND CONTROLS

[In this series of articles a Labour M.P. analyses the theory and practice of current British Socialism.]

THERE is no sharper contrast than that between the Socialist planning envisaged by the Labour Party during the 1930's and that which is now being directed by Sir Stafford Cripps. In the period after 1931, when Mr. Attlee wrote *Labour in Perspective* and Mr. Strachey *The Coming Struggle for Power,* Socialist thinking was dominated by two ideas. The first was the collapse of the MacDonald Government and the second the success of the Russian Five Year Plan. The two, of course, were inter-related. In the ignominy of defeat, the Party swung Left. Looking for scapegoats, it fixed on the bankers and persuaded itself that a Labour Government which really meant business would at once be faced by the saboteurs of the City and the F.B.I. To crush them, it would have to introduce its own "Gosplan" and streamline Parliament in order to achieve its drastic purposes.

And what has actually happened? Power was achieved in 1945, while the vast wartime emergency regulations were still in force. Exchange Control made a bankers' ramp impossible, and the continuance of rationing, price-fixing and raw material allocation was inevitable in the conditions of acute scarcity. The Bank of England, coal, power and transport were nationalised without any but the most correct forms of Parliamentary opposition. There was no breath of capitalist sabotage to justify any draconian measures.

On the other hand, it soon became clear that any form of "Gosplan" would meet with powerful opposition from the Labour Movement. Russian planning employs both a wages policy, imposed by the State, and direction of labour. To both of these the Trade Unions said "No," though they were later scared by the convertibility crisis into accepting a pale figment of direction.

This meant that the blueprints of the 'thirties had to be scrapped. If the State was not to decide the allocation of capital, labour and materials between the various needs of industry, by what agency was this allocation to be effected? If British Socialism did not mean centralised executive planning on the Russian model, what did it mean?

Not till July, 1947, was the Cabinet compelled to define its attitude. Then the definition was provided by Sir Stafford Cripps. He repudiated as totalitarian any form of "Gosplan." The central planning staff, he argued, in a democratic Socialist State, would merely draw up an annual production plan, in the achievement of which both sides of industry must co-operate. So, too, a democratic Socialist wages policy would consist of a statement by the Government on the undesirability of increased wages and dividends, backed by no sanctions or compulsion. The F.B.I. and the T.U.C. must persuade their members voluntarily to discipline themselves.

Put into these simple terms, the Chancellor's idea of planning seems puny compared with the blueprints of the 'thirties. But its simplicity is deceptive. The Government to-day wields enormous powers. On the financial side, it has not only Exchange Control, but, through the Bank of England, a considerable—though still insufficient—influence on the flow of investment. It can determine the location of industry, and, to a great extent, it can regulate both capital investment through industrial building licences, and current production through import licences. It exercises authority over the distribution and price of essential foodstuffs as well as over rents and housing. These powers, combined with its budgetary controls, provide it with implicit sanctions against those on either side of industry who fail to cooperate in the broad national plan. Indeed, it is probably true that—granted reasonable cooperation on both sides of industry, which is not likely to be refused, and a continuance of the present rate of recovery—the Labour Government already possesses nearly all the powers which it requires to ensure the execution of a Socialist plan. If Marshall Aid, however, were to end prematurely, there would be no alternative—except large-scale unemployment—to total planning, including the direction of labour. It is unlikely that such measures will be introduced by a democratic Government. The collapse of E.R.P. and of the present type of planning would probably mean not only the end of the Labour Government but of democracy as we know it.

In considering Labour's programme for the next five years, therefore, we can dismiss from consideration a planned economy in which production for use is literally substituted for production for profit. Under a Labour Government, a much modified profit yard-stick will remain valid for both nationalised and non-nationalised industries; and the price system, as scarcity dwindles, will become the norm from which departures will be the exception rather than the rule. The issues in debate are, first, the extent of those departures and, secondly, how best to explain to rank-and-file Socialists, nurtured on the Left Book Club, the Government's real attitude to prices and profits.

One school of Socialists will challenge both these assumptions. They argue that, by retaining controls and price-fixing and using them for explicitly Socialist purposes, the Government can directly control the economy. Coal and steel, for instance, can be allocated "according to merit," and firms put out of business which do not reach their export targets, or otherwise fail to carry out the national plan. The re-deployment of labour can be achieved by thus creating artificial unemployment in unessential industries. Similarly, price-fixing can be used deliberately to reduce the profit margin and so to "restore a healthy rate of bankruptcy" among inefficient firms, both in industry and retail trade. We can, in fact, bring a "Gosplan" in by the back door of emergency regulations.

This theory is attractive—on paper. Its proponents have one strong point in their favour. The present methods of allocating raw materials and of price-fixing have undoubtedly kept hundreds of inefficient firms out of the bankruptcy courts, and also induced capitalists to seek quick profits in unessential industries where raw material allocations are ineffective. They have thus been an obstacle both to re-deployment and to efficiency. But can we assume that, properly employed, they could have a better result? The answer is probably "No." In the first place, it is unwise to over-rate the ruthlessness of Labour politicians. When it comes to the point, the Minister of Supply, for instance, will refrain from deliberately bankrupting a firm by withholding its steel allocation, and the President of the Board of Trade will refuse to fix prices quite deliberately so that thousands of small traders are forced to close down. It is not in the nature of a Labour Minister to create artificial unemployment by Order in Council, and so to attract on to the Cabinet all the odium which previously attached to abstract economic law, and to the capitalist system.

In the second place, both raw material controls and price-fixing were always clumsy instruments, even under wartime conditions, and the former at least must cease to be effective as soon as scarcity disappears. If, for instance, during the next twelve months steel "comes into balance" and supply slightly exceeds demand, the steel control will automatically cease to function as a sanction against the inefficient producer, just as clothes rationing by coupon becomes futile the moment there are more clothes in the shops than money in the customers' pockets. *You cannot ration plenty, except in a totalitarian State.* Moreover, if the British people ever had reason to suspect that controls and rationing were being retained for their own sake and not because goods were in short supply, it would repudiate the Government at the next election.

Does this mean that we must return to the pure price system at the earliest opportunity? Some of the Government advisers say "Yes." But this is as much a paper solution as the opposite extreme. No practical politician can deny the need for guaranteed prices to farmers, for a continuation of the food subsidies, or for rent restriction. Yet these are all flagrant interferences with the price system. Furthermore, no one who knows anything of the habits of the British business man would pretend that the export drive can be sustained, or our bilateral trade pacts fulfilled, if industry is freed from all control and permitted to choose between the domestic and the foreign markets.

What is needed here is a re-definition of Socialist doctrine. The democratic Socialist does not accept the Communist view that the State should plan in detail all production and distribution. It is not our aim either to compel everyone to do the work we think he is best suited to, or to provide people with goods according to our definition of their needs. That is slavery. Under proper safeguards, most people prefer to sell their labour and to buy their goods in a free market. What the democratic Socialist is determined to achieve is that the freedom of the market is a genuine freedom, and this demands interference with the price system at many points.

To begin with, we have to ensure to every family a minimum standard of civilised life, including social security, education, and food and lodging at reasonable and stable prices. Rent restriction, housing subsidies and food subsidies, though they started as emergency measures, have become an essential part of British Socialism. Possibly the £500,000,000 spent on food subsidies could be better distributed—a subsidy on clothes at the cost of slightly raising food prices, for instance—but this does not affect the principle. The price system cannot be permitted to undermine the social minimum. Until every family can obtain that minimum, "consumers' choice" and "equality of opportunity" are empty phrases. This is the first reason why, though the price system will become the norm, the Socialist State will depart from it in certain important respects.

The second reason is the need for exports. We must plan our production, and consequently our imports, because we must plan our foreign trade, if we are to purchase the raw materials and foodstuffs we require and to increase our domestic agricultural output, so as to cut down imports. Moreover, we must continue to do this even if the present raw material controls are ultimately rendered unnecessary by adequate supplies.

Within the limitations, however, set by these two basic principles, the Socialist should be ready to accept the restoration of the price system. He should not be afraid of competition in the non-socialised sector of industry; indeed, he should encourage it by legislation directed against the trade associations which are throttling initiative and free enterprise. Here, Mr. Strachey at the Ministry of Food has set an excellent example. The non-socialised sector must be genuinely competitive within the new framework created by Socialist planning. That framework must be designed not to destroy free enterprise but to neutralise its anti-social effects; not to penalise the enlightened capitalist but to make enlightenment compulsory for all.

The main difficulty here is not in the formulation of a Socialist doctrine. This can be done simply by following out the logic of Sir Stafford Cripps's policies and foreseeing the conditions which will be created by the success of his export drive. The real problem is to persuade the Labour Movement that a planned economy of this sort would be both Socialist and democratic. The rank-and-file party member still assumes that the price system and profit-making are incompatible with Socialism. He feels that the Government could somehow control profits, while leaving wages free, and plan production in detail without direction of labour. So far, with the exception of Sir Stafford Cripps, the Cabinet has made little effort to enlighten him on these points. Sooner or later the task must be undertaken.

ONE MAN'S VISA

LET me admit that the shipping company approached in March could hold out no guarantee of a passage in August; that the Treasury said dollar applications could only be made three months before sailing; and that the letter of invitation from America which—for reasons far more sinister than international politeness you must have—was unaccountably delayed. But none of this stood beside the visa. I joined the queue in the American Visa Office one midsummer morning and, after two hours of intense idleness, decided that this was altogether too well organised a bottle-neck. I was due in Paris the following day, and when I could bear it no longer I went out, phoned the American Embassy, and asked whether there was some more direct means of reaching the Consular demi-gods. Someone suggested prayer. I fell back on an appointment made by the Embassy with the Visa Department for three o'clock in the afternoon.

At 3.30 I was still sitting in the inner sanctum proudly and obviously head of a queue which passed steadily over my head. My appointment had been recognised but not honoured. It was the ultimate democratic device to let the queue have its way at the expense of a person who imagined himself privileged.

" Mr. Brome . . "

There was a girl talking to the Visa Officer as I entered his room. Whatever disembodied part of myself gained footing, it was obviously not concentrated enough to make itself felt. They continued talking for what seemed to me an unconscionable time; perhaps it wasn't. When the girl had gone, the Visa Officer dropped his eyes to his papers; and a face of such total impassivity stared down into the depths of such a commonplace desk that I felt he was about to communicate with my spirit and was vividly reminded of the crippled Titan Henley locked in a state of incoherence.

A very stilly pause while I slipped, with as much grace as I could summon, into the chair facing the desk and waited. When the Visa Officer still did not speak I remembered how a very distinguished British journalist had left the Visa Department in a spluttering rage, his nerve broken by the simple process of silent resistance which thickened and darkened—or was it my imagination ?—with every passing second. There was no open breach of any known code, but . . . if he had come from Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, it must have been a long time ago.

" What is the purpose of your visit to the United States ? "

He had sat back, turning my passport, delivering the questions into the air, with something close to arrogance.

" To see some American editors and publishers and cover the elections for *Picture Post* and . . ." I cannot say if the name of the second journal shook him, or pleased or puzzled him; for his face remained a desert. But he fastened on it.

" What is this paper ? "

" A political weekly."

" What does it stand for ? "

" It's anti-Communist and at the moment pro-American . . ." A thought struck me. " At least, that's as I read it. What a paper stands for is a very subtle business. I have known editors who didn't know themselves. I should have thought anyone who had been in this country . . ."

" Are you a member of the Communist Party?"

" No."

" Do you believe in Communist ideas ? "

" No."

" Have you at any time been a member of the Communist Party ? "

" No." How trusting. It would be so easy to lie.

" What form of government do you believe in? "

Words rushed at me. The infinitely subtle pattern of a way of society where the whole social process was instinct with a different purpose flashed through my mind, and I knew I could never answer his question in under an hour.

" The present," I said.

A shuffling of papers, a momentary glance from the cold eyes and then, with inter-stellar detachment: " I shall have to refer to Washington. It takes up to two months."

" I have a boat sailing in three weeks."

" It takes up to two months."

" Has it been known to get through in under ? "

" I can't guarantee anything. . ."

The Treasury asked for three months' notice. If your dollar negotiations dragged on for five or six weeks, you were left with seven or eight weeks to get your visa; and if the Visa Officer, guided by whatever divinity rough hews his ends, referred you to Washington, it might take eight weeks. One process seemed beautifully calculated to invalidate the other.

" Could you cable ? "

" Yes; at your expense."

" At *my* expense, but. . . ." I gave it up and went. The Visa Officer made no comment as I left. There were friends in the Embassy who set a great machinery moving. They sent a cable to Washington on my behalf. " I suppose," I said, " it's the old Ellis Island tradition in modern dress," and got no answer. I rang back to the Visa Department, agreed to pay £3 for their cable to Washington and was told by a voice poised between detachment and dislike: " I understand you have somebody working for you in the Embassy. . . ." I remembered Tito's resistance movement and somewhere, for a moment, Grosvenor Square was sinister with shrouded figures.

Had I but known. Love is not the greatest bond between Consulate and Embassy in any country, but here the Cinderella of the foreign services sat most firmly on rather more than its rights. Am I putting too personal an interpretation on one more example of that ancient law whereby an irreducible quantity of injustice remains whichever way you run the world, a world where an innocent must periodically go to the slaughter? So far, the whole procedure had been quite within the Visa Department's terms of reference, sharpened in the baleful atmosphere of un-American activities and with a certain predisposition to see Communism hidden in the ordinary Socialist heart. But they succeeded in leaving something more than a nasty taste in my mouth. I might have been the man marked down from birth to murder the American way of life, and, quite irrelevantly, Shakespeare kept recurring . . . God's angry ape dressed in a little brief authority. . . .

Two weeks went by. I began to cancel the elaborate pattern of engagements in America, to battle with a remarkably accommodating shipping company and set a dozen new wheels turning. The Foreign Office listened sympathetically, a friendly Junior Minister thought the Ambassador himself might reach down from the clouds, half a dozen M.P.s sizzled with good intentions; and a whole snowball of advice and noble protestations and even threats accumulated, until it seemed that nothing could stand against it. The Visa Department did.

Another week, and I was summoned once more to Grosvenor Square. If some seventh journalistic sense told me that the chill might have melted under so many persuasions I was not altogether disappointed, and not even the way the finger print technician took my hand and reproduced every syllable of my recorded time, could quite overwhelm the touch of sun in the air. I had my visa. But my ship had sailed.

VINCENT BROME

ON DEFENDING A TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

ENGLAND and America are no longer defensible, in spite of General Montgomery. When I say that, I am not thinking only, or even chiefly, of atomic and bacterial weapons. Generals, I imagine, rely on our marshalling enough bluff or enough retaliatory power to prevent a trial of weapons. Bombs and material destruction, moreover, have been, and can be, survived, and they only abolish patterns of culture which are predominantly material and architectural. Our own culture is highly vulnerable for this reason, but we are basically indefensible because of the way in which we live.

The changes in our patterns of living have gone so far since Marx and Engels that some of their comment on historical forces looks as archaic as a full-bottomed wig. To the economic factors of the Industrial Revolution, which began the present process, we have to add innumerable new factors, previously overlooked. To Marxism we have to add social anthropology, and we revise in adding.

Marx would have recognised that a society which contained a vocal proletariat could not be defended (by the management) in an imperialist war. It would explode into Socialist revolution. Our society is indefensible by reason of entirely different internal strains, and under the stress of preparation for war and the consequences of war, successful or unsuccessful, it would explode, probably without re-forming into any organised pattern.

A proletariat, a body of dispossessed people attempting to secure its rights, is a social unit. You can rally it, organise it as a mob or a class, and base your estimate of its probable conduct on knowledge of the common attitudes of its members to one another and to other classes. Dispossession in contemporary urban society, both here and in America, is of an entirely different kind. It is biological rather than economic, it affects the management as well as the citizens, and where it is canalised into overt acts, those acts tend to take the form, not of revolutionary action, but of individual delinquency or communal aggression. The economic proletariat had nothing to lose but its chains; the dispossessed to-day, as they figure in social anthropology or attend out-patient clinics, have lost everything but their identity.

A Marxist proletariat, where you still find it, in Glasgow or the East Side, is fundamentally social. It is held together by a solidarity of personal relationships which has to be experienced to be appreciated. The indefensible, a-social dispossessed, kids in the Juvenile Court, or company directors in the York Clinic, are in solitary confinement. Like the proletariat of earlier days, the focus is urban, but its attitudes control national attitudes. The defence of England means, largely, the defence of cities, and the city pattern becomes the weakest link of the chain.

The term "a-social society" seems to be due in the first place to Patrick Geddes. You can construct a model of it easily and accurately.

Think of a city full of people who never leave their houses, but are connected singly to headquarters by one-way telephone. The telephone system controls for them very nearly all the activities which have formerly occupied human time. Their football is played by professional footballers, and laid on; their function in public order is delegated to professional police; their artistic expression is delegated to professional artists and musicians; their sex is delegated to professional film stars. Their public actions are those of a mob connected only by telephone.

The Management itself consists of individuals who are equally emptied of personal relationships and activities, but who happen to be at the transmitting end of the system. When they talk aloud they are overheard, and what they say is the only external directive which the listeners receive. Perched on the top of this pyramid of individuals, they show as clearly as the listeners the effects of loneliness and boredom; but, like a man who is ordered to carry the packs of an entire company, they are subject to greater stresses, and their tantrums, their fears, and their prejudices radiate over the entire system of telephones. For all these individuals, the only entity to which the name Society can be applied is the mechanical and electrical system of the exchange.

It is a society in which the family is the largest coherent group, but a family whose members drop off early, and whose survival as a unit is limited; in which most people do not know the name of their next-door neighbour but two; in which individual activities are almost wholly limited to techniques—a society of congested, well equipped, insecure onlookers. It has very few social sanctions and a profound sense of guilt, which it cannot control by conforming to an accepted norm or making recognised atonement. Anxiety, as B.O. or as "blood, tears and sweat," is its main driving force, corresponding to the yells and shots by which cowboys propel steers. It cannot be "defended," because there is nothing to defend, except buildings and paper, the wiring of the exchange. And the wires, the uniselectors and the telephone relays are God, to which, if it pays any homage, homage is paid and responsibility admitted.

War does not come to such a community in the guise of an opportunity, as it may come to an economic proletariat, though it may come as a relief. In the last war, danger and destruction revived older patterns of sociality on a national scale. People actually spoke to strangers, and had an objective—"winning." The physical manning of defences could still be carried out—morale, the measure of the readiness with which the telephone-bell is obeyed, became something more significant. Atom bombs might conceivably act in the same way. It is against the preparation of war, the break-up of surviving but precarious family relations and individual structures of living, the government by sustained anxiety, that it has no power of resistance; nor has it against victory, the necessity of going back as individuals to objectless and unoccupied loneliness. Defeat may save such a society by giving it a respectable and legitimate focus for its pent-up desire to smash things—victory is rapidly fatal to it.

How such societies end, and how they can be altered, social anthropology does not yet know for certain—sometimes they collapse into tyrannies or deserts, sometimes, like the Byzantine Empire, they draw stumps and go home. Our own is the first to come under contemporary scientific observation. If it can be understood, it may possibly be altered by the re-focusing of individual aggression from external outlets such as nationalism or anti-Semitism into intelligent disobedience. But its capacity for military defence, in a period when cities are indefensible, and the rural, more social areas depend upon the city for their living and their direction, is nil. It will take more fundamental measures than addresses from the balcony of the Mansion House to restore the security of Western cultures.

ALEX. COMFORT

A MEETING IN MOSCOW

WHILE I am sometimes asked about Stanislavsky, no one ever remembers to ask me about Nemirovich Dantchenko, who was to Stanislavsky not merely a right hand, but quite the half of him. A very well-read man, a writer, very cool-headed . . . and I was given to understand at once, when I arrived in Moscow (1908) that he was not the man I should take any notice of at all. But I have quite a few delightful memories of him. I do not mean that there is anything profound about these memories; I do not speak of him as a genius; I speak of him as a clever man.

I knew him in what may be called the good old days of 1908 to 1912. (For after a first visit to Moscow in 1905, I returned there, to begin work on *Hamlet*, in 1908—and not, as Mr. Gorelik states in his *New Theatres for Old*, in 1911.) (A number of Mr. Gorelik's other statements are incorrect, by the way. . . . I don't know where he gets them from.)

The last time I saw Dantchenko was in 1935. It was in Moscow—he was in his old home (others had been obliged to leave theirs, not he), and that old home unchanged. On the walls were the same pictures; a large photograph of a Burne-Jones painting, which I had seen before (in 1910) and not expected then, was still in its place—and unexpected again. Yet there was one remarkable change, which, at the time I noticed it, I tried to take as little notice of as possible; and of this I will tell you now.

It concerns Madame Dantchenko. She was the same dear lady she always had been—that is to say, untheatrical, and apparently still as unconcerned with the stage as she had always been. The actors and actresses all liked her, but she was of the home and that only—Monsieur Nemirovich Dantchenko's home. She was a most hospitable hostess, but she had a way of too soon effacing herself. In the midst of lively talk she would vanish, or seem to: on turning round to ask her some question, one would not find her there. One might hear a far-off tinkle of cups or little glasses, and she might presently reappear in our midst with a tray of these or of those; but she made more of the glasses than of herself—again she seemed to disappear. It is a great gift, this of obliteration—suicides over-practise it, but it is on the grand side of life, not on its meaner side.

But when I came to lunch with Nemirovich Dantchenko, on April 7th, 1935, the astonishing thing happened: he had trained her to become quite the most remarkable actress I ever saw in that land. Listen . . . while I was talking of a number of things with Nemirovich Dantchenko in his cosy salon, awaiting the arrival of Leonidov and Katchalov and a few others who were invited to the luncheon-party, a far-off sound reached my ears—a sound which at first I could not define.

We still went on talking, and the sound came nearer. I would have said it must be a brushing sound, but who would begin sweeping a floor at 12.45 and just previous to luncheon? But the sound shortly became a noise as the door opened—and behold, Mrs. Nemirovich Dantchenko! . . . her head swathed by a white cotton kerchief, with a broom in her hands, plying it with the greatest care, steadily advancing, brushing every corner, round my feet and round his feet and the feet of the sofa and the chairs. On she went, on and on, and finally out of the room. Not a word said—though I rose for an instant, and Nemirovich Dantchenko said "*No,*" and continued to tell me about the new opera he was giving in a month's time.

All this passed out of my mind until to-day, when it all came back; and as I thought about it all I began to smile and then to understand the whole thing.

Years previous to my visit, one of the big men of the Soviet Union, in a talk with Nemirovich Dantchenko, had told him how the house of a good Bolshevik was conducted, what was done, how it was done, and when; and in the course of this detailed programme (for it took an hour and a half to tell it—and longer to hear it) the duties of a good Bolshevik wife were made clear: " . . . and before luncheon and after supper she will take her broom and sweep clean the corridor and then the floors of dining-room and sitting-room, knocking on the doors before she opens them; and if necessary she will dust each picture, each chair and every table and bookshelf twice a day. . . ."

Much more was said—but to Nemirovich Dantchenko enough had been said. Next day his wife had a rehearsal (her very first!) as to how to perform this role of a good Bolshevik. Nemirovich Dantchenko stood inside the room and she stood in the passage. The door is shut. "Can you hear me?" said Nemirovich. "What did you say?" asked Madame. Raising his voice, a thing he hated to do, he repeated his query: "Can you hear me?" "Of course I can," said Madame.

A pause, while Nemirovich Dantchenko put up his right hand with index-finger extended. "Take your broom and sweep the passage and then come in here and sweep this room."

A pause—and soon the brushing sounds began. Nearer and nearer they came, and then the door opened and . . . "Stop!" says Nemirovich. "Shut the door. Knock always before you enter. A good Bolshevik wife does so, and you must remember you are the wife of a good Bolshevik."

The door closes: the sound of sweeping restarts. Nemirovich Dantchenko, standing alone in the closed room, nods his head as though saying, "Quite right!"

Soon after the crescendo comes the pause, and then the knock. "Come in," says Nemirovich Dantchenko in Russian (I ought to have told you before that all their talk was carried on in that language).

Entering, the good Madame Dantchenko, determined to be worthy of her dear husband, and having thought it over carefully in the passage, begins such a sweeping of the room that after eight minutes watching as a good *régisseur* should watch, Nemirovich sees that the job is going to take his wife half an hour, and sits down to read Stanislavsky's latest volume of "memoirs," and in a moment or two is fast asleep.

It is, of course, the sound of Madame Dantchenko's regular sweeping which has overcome his senses like an opiate.

When, after thirty minutes, he was still breathing as heavily as ever, Madame Dantchenko let her broom fall, so as to wake him up—and he woke up and he went on talking just as though he had never been asleep for a single instant. And he said unto her, "My dear Kamskatka" (or whatever her Christian name was), "when you brush the floor, brush quietly and regularly and only as long as is necessary—drop nothing—and go on and go out brushing. Except" (he added) "when Constantin Alexeivich" (I fancy this was the affectionate pet name of his colleague Stanislavsky) "is here, or he will be introducing this hypnotic sound of the sweeper into one of the Tchekov plays, and that might prove fatal. But except when it's Alexeivich, do as the American poet put it: 'Brush, Katka, Brush with care. Brush in the presence of the passengare.' For," added Nemirovich for the seventh or eighth time, "this is what it means to be the good wife of a good Bolshevik. Everyone who hears you coming up the passage with the broom must say to themselves, 'Here comes the good wife Katka of the good Bolshevik Dantchenko.' And if any foreigner comes here, he, too, must go away saying he has heard the good wife of the good Bolshevik Dantchenko brushing the passages, and that he had seen the said good wife come into the room and brush all around it and go out again."

And while you or I, dear reader, might have added: "*And if that don't save our skins, nothing will,*" the great and dear old Nemirovich Dantchenko added nothing.

GORDON CRAIG

The Arts and Entertainment

MUSIC

"Simone Boccanegra," at Sadler's Wells

It is a typical instance of our topsy-turvy operatic life that, while Covent Garden plans to produce that intimate rococo comedy, *The Marriage of Figaro*, Sadler's Wells should be tackling the heroic *Simone Boccanegra*. However, as things are, the Verdi-lover has reason to be grateful for the anomalous location. Covent Garden is passing through an experimentalist phase, in which the claims of music tend to be subordinated to the fantasies of gifted, but imperfectly musical, designers and producers; and so long as this period of immaturity lasts, it is just as well that the regime should confine its efforts to popular favourites, which can take a lot of manhandling without absolutely fatal results. *Boccanegra* is a more delicate proposition, demanding in its first English sponsors intimate knowledge, a sense of style and passionate enthusiasm for the work itself; fortunately, none of these qualities is wanting at Sadler's Wells.

In this admirable revival the guiding spirit has been Mr. Tucker his translation is clear and intensely singable (I have never heard so many words come across with less damage to the vocal line), and he has made a number of ingenious changes which render the action reasonably intelligible, even to a casual spectator. But he has done more than that. Though his admiration for this wonderful child of Verdi's genius is evidently intense, he has here and there treated the score with a freedom which might have incurred some censure were the music more familiar. He has not only at one point transposed two stretches of music, but with great daring invented on his own account a new opening to the final scene: that is to say, composed a reminiscent prelude, which is not Verdi's, though based, of course, on previously heard themes and retaining as far as possible their original orchestration. All our instincts warn us that this is a most dangerous precedent; and yet the strange fact remains that at a crucial stage in the action the house is gripped by a piece of music which sounds so Verdian, so relevant and so little synthetic that several members of the audience afterwards singled it out for particular praise.

Michael Mudie is one of the few English conductors with a true feeling for Italian opera; everything falls into place as it should, and my one serious complaint is that his tempo at the opening of the first act is too fast for the wood-wind, too fast for the soprano and too fast for Verdi's *Lento assai* and metronome marking. The singers rose splendidly to the occasion; if James Johnston alone possessed the white-hot intensity demanded by this music, the other principals had their fine moments, and never failed seriously in the matter of style. Howell Glynne is a noble and sonorous Fiesco who just fails to come right up to the boil; Frederick Sharp makes an effective villain; Joyce Gartside, after a weak opening, soars magnificently in the later scenes. Boccanegra himself? Without the physical advantages of a great voice or a commanding presence, Arnold Matters is nevertheless successful in establishing that impression of open-hearted, natural magnanimity which is the essence of Verdi's dramatic idea; his death scene was noble. The sets, in which John Piper collaborated with the excellent producer John Moody, are always distinguished and sometimes beautiful, only the Grimaldi terrace proving a slight disappointment in the matter of grandeur and spaciousness. Altogether, this was a memorable evening in the annals of Sadler's Wells.

Last Sunday at the Winter Garden Theatre Mr. Kentner began a series of seven recitals during which he is to play all the piano sonatas of Beethoven. Though his instrument bore the noble name of Steinway, it was seriously deficient in depth and lustre of tone: a frequent circumstance for which contemporary pianists are to be pitied rather than blamed. There is now a desperate shortage of good pianos in England; unless the Government, so generous in its support of music, quickly allots some funds to replenish the supply, the public will begin to lose all sense of beautiful piano tone, just as the absence of a proper concert hall has almost killed the notion of beautiful orchestral tone. Mr. Kentner was at his best in the *Pathétique*, and played throughout with care and sensibility; in the first movement of the late A major Sonata (Op. 101), his frequent fluctuations of speed were at variance with the celestial calm and simplicity of the music.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

AT THE GALLERIES

THERE seem now to be only two ways open to young English painters: either they can draw on the native "Romantic tradition," or they can take their clue from Paris and, more particularly, Picasso. Mr. Patrick Heron, who is showing his recent still-lifes and landscapes at the Redfern Gallery, will hardly be surprised at being counted among the second group. He is, in fact, Picasso's closest follower this country. Every one of his works is a fra statement of his allegiance to the Master and, course, by such closeness provokes comparison wi its prototypes. If only one could forget the mon mentality and astounding matter-of-factness of th Picassos one has seen, these smaller canvases b Mr. Heron would deserve nothing but praise f their firm statement of form, their successful attem at perspective, which is brought about by a break the colour where shape recedes into depth, and f their refusal to be literary, sentimental or fussy But there are so many things to remind us: th oil-lamps which first burnt in Picasso's pictures, th fishes, the jugs—here and there combined with som more English tea-caddies and other objects from th home-market—and, most important of all, th familiar handling of cool, even cold, colours. However, it is one of the functions of the great Master to show the way to the smaller ones, and these cann do better than to turn to the main spring. A voluntary attachment of this kind becomes dangerous on when the disciple follows—and imitates—his maste from phase to phase. Mr. Heron may have no intention of taking such a course—particularly as he ma himself realise that he is at his best when more independent, as in his "Still-life with Black Bananas" or in "Harbour-bottom," where his touch is delightfully spirited and in "The Dahlias and the Sunflower," where a sudden explosion of red and yellow gives his flowers real vitality.

The recent paintings of William Scott, which wer exhibited at the Leicester Galleries, show more independence, but less firmness. Here is a lyrical talen whose subjects include still-lifes, landscapes, hea and whole figures, often conveyed with great feelin for fine tonality. Brown is combined with gree black and white, grey with black and flesh-tints. Th is a world of sad females, preferably clad in pla shirts; gay fishes, such as now swim, dead or aliv everywhere between Paris and London; and roun dishes, bowls, colanders, frying pans, baskets an jugs. A pleasant roundness—of limbs, dishes an most contours—is indeed a characteristic of th painter, and it seems to be epitomised in those egg of all shades which he renders so frequently and lovingly. Within the contours there is an econom of detail which produces a—certainly intentional, b nevertheless dangerous—flatness. The expressivene of this art is gentle enough to please, without eve attempting to stir, and Mr. Scott's good taste ca be relied upon as long as he does not pretend to b an imaginative artist and sticks to reality.

Elinor Bellingham-Smith, who exhibited in th same gallery, has learnt most of what she is doi

The fable of the well-dressed man

A Visitor from another land once exclaimed in admiration at the spartan way of life he found in a certain isle. 'Ah!' he cried, 'I fear you must despise the superior elegance of my attire!' His hosts discreetly forbore to point out that his suit had come from their own best tailors, his sword from their own armourers, his hat and boots from their native hatters and cordwainers. They wisely preferred things that way round.

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from the French Impressionists, mainly from Renoir, but also from Whistler. She paints river-scenes, green meadows, children and young women. She has charm, even wit, but her art comes sometimes too close to that of the children's book illustrator. This should not prevent anybody from seeing that she is able to make a patch of grass as alive as her French masters have taught her, and to mix just enough red or pink into the blue of her streams to achieve an agreeable effect of softness and sensuousness. The haze which half hides some of her figures is beneficial as it covers an occasional tendency to be naturalistic. The tender treatment of the picture surface, which Miss Bellingham-Smith covers with very thin layers of paint, adds to the attractiveness of her pictures.

EDITH HOFFMANN

RADIO NOTES

THE B.B.C. perseveres in its efforts to make us conscious of the facts of the economic situation, and for its latest attempt, the three programmes called *How Are We Doing?* it deserves congratulation. On separate evenings Miss Florence Hancock, of the T.U.C., Sir Frederick Bain, of the Federation of British Industries, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—surely the first time a cabinet minister has submitted to being grilled at the microphone—answered the question before a studio audience, members of which were allowed to put questions to them. Each programme, in other words, was a public meeting in miniature, and each provided very good entertainment; this may be regarded as evidence of at least partial success, for entertainment is much more likely to hold listeners' attention than exhortation. As at a public meeting, it was scarcely possible not to take sides for or against the speaker and not to react violently for and against the several questioners. On all three occasions the atmosphere in the studio was commendably free from undue reverence. Part of the fun, of course, consisted in hearing the great put on the spot; not that anything like that happened to the Chancellor, who was lucid, downright and imperturbable and whose one joke seemed to take his audience completely by surprise; but Miss Hancock and Sir Frederick Bain were more vulnerable. Indeed, the combination of public address and talk at the microphone presented the speakers with difficulties which only the Chancellor was able to surmount; he successfully spoke both to his studio audience and to the listeners; but one felt that neither Miss Hancock nor Sir Frederick were at home at the microphone. The latter's final peroration might have gone down in the emotionally charged atmosphere of a public meeting, but the wireless listener differs from any other kind of audience in being alone and therefore by comparison in a state of stone-cold sobriety. I intend no disrespect when I say that there were moments when Sir Frederick sounded as though he had strayed out of Tomtopia. But then, so did some of the questioners, in particular, I am afraid, the two housewives.

Mr. W. R. Rodgers's highbrow travelogue, *Summer in Europe,* broadcast on the first cold evening of winter, was excellent entertainment—for the first hour. Mr. Rodgers is one of our most successful radio poets; always a poet of shock-tactics, his vivid unexpected imagery and syncopated rhythms make his verse admirable for broadcasting. But the programme was too long by at least twenty minutes. The recordings, good as they were, would have been improved by much more severe editing, especially those of the Italian wine harvest, a sequence which went on so long that I began to fear they'd never get the harvest in.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE MOVIES

"Quartet," at the Odeon

As a novelist and story-writer Mr. Maugham has very much fancied the unobtrusive "I." He makes a point of keeping in touch, of spotting his hero in a crowded ballroom and walking across to meet him, or having a tea-cake thrown in his face by some angry lady to whom he has given unflattering advice. These casual intimacies supply important threads in that web of worldliness which Mr. Maugham spins for his and our delight; and it is no surprise to find him on the screen introducing four of his own stories in person. He plays the part of Maugham very well; much better, for example, than a couple of years back did sleepy Mr. Marshall. He has the charm of detachment and success. "In one way and another I have used pretty well everything that has happened to me in the course of my life. In my twenties the critics said I was brutal, in my thirties they said I was flippant, in my forties they said I was cynical and in my fifties they said I was competent, and then in my sixties they said I was superficial . . ." Said with a smile. Few writers smile when they speak of their critics.

The stories themselves, as they emerge on the screen, have kept in varying degrees a Maugham flavour. The first is no more than a club anecdote: a father who has warned his son against gambling, lending, and women finds the advice triumphantly flouted. The second ("The Alien Corn") tells the story of a rich young man, who scandalises his family by going off to practice piano-playing for ten hours a day; he returns to stand the trial of expert opinion and being short of talents, kills himself. Neither of these tales involves us at all deeply, although both are lifelike and eminently viewable.

Numbers three and four raise the tension from anecdote to story. "The Kite" discovers a young man imprisoned for refusing to pay his wife a penny, and when asked why, he answers "She smashed my kite." What! Our amused gasp is then exploited in an odd, appealing manner through the adventures of a small suburban householder, a young man (very convincingly played by George Cole) who has always flown a kite on Saturday afternoon, a mother who has helped with the kites and now uses them to break up his marriage. The sinister undertow is barely hinted at; only the surface, the people concerned, the event as it has turned out are artfully employed by Mr. Maugham. With the fourth piece, "The Colonel's Lady," we are back in one of Mr. Maugham's country houses; the busy landlord and sportsman finds that his wife, who has long retired to the other end of the table behind horn-rims, is the author of a book of poems; successfully so, what is more; scandalously so, he soon discovers from his club-mates and committee-men, and even his mistress, who all seem to have read the book ("literature, but hot stuff") and to grin at him as the husband. Reading it for the second time himself he makes out the confession of a passionate love-affair with a young man now dead, and above his riddled complacency there rises the unbidden cry: "What in heaven did the fellow ever see in her?" It then turns out in the film that the young lover now dead is himself. Mr. Cecil Parker gives a brilliant performance as this wounded good fellow. The whole film which started with Mr. Maugham lightly moralising ends with his good wishes for our pleasure. And we have—yes, of that there's no doubt—enjoyed ourselves.

And yet how much we have in fact missed of the original subtlety and point can be investigated by anyone who, having seen the film, will then read the stories and the scripts collected together in *Quartet* (Heinemann, 8s 6d). The transition from print to screen has involved, we shall find, destroying the whole background and point of "The Alien Corn" and tagging new and not very happy (though sentimental) ends to "The Kite" and "The Colonel's Lady." The mutilation, except in the case of "The Alien Corn," has been skilfully carried out; but why should film versions so detract from their originals, why must every jam be given the same full-fruit flavour? Mr. R. C. Sherriff, the script-writer, refers soothingly in an introduction to "the normal business of adaptation to the screen." Normal! Usual this processing may be, natural or inevitable it is not.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

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Correspondence

THE LABOUR PARTY'S DILEMMA

Sir,—Once more Mr. Zilliacus repeats his attempts to identify "the workers on the Continent" with the Communist Party, and it is high time to destroy this fairy-tale once and for ever. In the beginning of his letter he states that "the *overwhelming majority* of the European working class, outside Switzerland, the Anglo-American zones of military occupation, and the small democracies of North-western Europe, have accepted and stuck to Communist or United Front trade union and political leadership." Later he simply speaks of the Communists as of "*the* workers of Europe," claiming their right (which nobody denies) "to go forward under Communist leadership wherever they so choose. In France, Italy and elsewhere they have chosen."

The sober facts are that—to use Mr. Zilliacus's phraseology—"*the* workers" or "the *overwhelming majority* of the working class" of Austria (not mentioned by Mr. Zilliacus at all), Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Luxemburg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and both the Western zones of Germany refuse Communist leadership most emphatically. In Eastern Germany and "elsewhere"—to use again Mr. Zilliacus's phraseology—there is not the slightest possibility of a choice. It is not true that "*the* workers" in "France, Italy and elsewhere(!)" have chosen Communist leadership. "The workers" have not chosen anything, but a considerable proportion of them in France and Italy (not in an imaginary "elsewhere") have joined the Communist ranks. Yet by no means all; many of them are waging a desperate battle for survival as democratic Socialists. The British Labour Party is a beacon of hope to them. Mr. Zilliacus wants to have this beacon extinguished. He would be well advised not to speak about "the treachery of some of our leaders to everything for which Labour stands."

Mr. Zilliacus desires the inclusion of the Communists in the French Government. The French Communists now do everything in their power to wreck the Marshall Plan and to make the recovery of the country impossible. Only the Plan can guarantee a French revival on the lines democratic Socialists are hoping and fighting for. Mr. Zilliacus prefers to see this hope destroyed.

Mr. Zilliacus is silent about Berlin and Vienna. Does he recommend surrender of the Berlin and Viennese Socialists, because defending their right to exist would mean "coming down on the side of the capitalists against the workers?"

When displaying his special brand of political arithmetic nearly two years ago, Mr. Zilliacus told your readers (The New Statesman and Nation, January 4, 1947) almost the same story as now, with an addition which he to-day omits: "They (the Communists) are in complete control in Yugoslavia." Does he recommend the British workers to bow to the Moscow pattern or to the Belgrade pattern of Communism?

The question whether the Labour Party is "for the workers or against the Communists in Europe" is very easily answered. The Labour Party stands for democratic Socialism and for the workers. There is no dilemma to be resolved here and the Labour Party does not sacrifice "the workers of Europe to its anti-Communist fanaticism," whereas Mr. Zilliacus wants to sacrifice them to his pro-Communist fanaticism. What he is advocating means "friendly collaboration" between a cat and a canary. Is there anybody ready to play the part of the canary?

J. W. Bruegel

65 Beaufort Park, London, N.W.11.

Sir,—A dilemma may have horns, but Mr. Horner has no dilemma. You say he has a "dual loyalty" which seems to place him in an impossible position. Communists have only one loyalty. That is to the working class. In that loyalty their policies as members of trade unions and as Communists coincide. Mr. Horner (and every other trade union leader who is a Communist) has reached his position because he is a Communist and as such has devoted a lifetime of work to the workers' movement.

The sole *raison d'être* for a trade union is to improve and safeguard workers' conditions, and because of this it has no interest in preserving the capitalist system. That does not mean that workers' organisations should sabotage or decry increased production. Their job is to see that the workers (who produce the wealth of the country) should receive the full fruits of their labour. The greatest drag on production is that workers are not especially keen to see increased profits and record dividends declared at the expense of their sacrifices.

That is where the dilemma comes in. Not for Mr. Horner and the Communists, but for his enemies.

They have a "dual loyalty." They try to be both leaders of the working class and anti-Communist at the same time. This leads them to support the millionaires of Wall Street against the struggles of the working class; and we have the spectacle of the Tories and the Right-wing Labour leaders in an unholy alliance against "Soviet aggression," which means workers' control, in defence of "Western Civilisation" which means the capitalist system.

Mr. Horner does not need any "directive from Moscow" in order to support the French miners. In standing for the international solidarity of the working class against injustice and exploitation, Mr. Horner is doing his job both as a Communist and as secretary of a great trade union.

E. Yopa

23 Vincent Square, S.W.1.

UNO AND PALESTINE

Sir,—Your contention that the Jewish victory in Southern Palestine has killed the Bernadotte plan, because without the use of strong military forces it is out of the question for the United Nations to dislodge the Jews either from the Northern Negeb or from the Jewish corridor or from Western Galilee, and that therefore a settlement must be reached now on the basis of the new *status quo,* involving, as one of the ingredients of its success, British recognition of Israel, leaves one, morally, gasping for breath. Quite regardless of the merits or demerits of the Bernadotte plan (support of which you were strongly advocating only a few weeks ago) your present thesis, if accepted, would reduce the United Nations to a pompous and unnecessary instrument for recognising every *fait accompli* secured by force and in direct defiance of its decisions. Settlement of international disputes by force has always been possible and can continue to be possible without the expensive, wasteful and hypocritical instrumentality of international organisations set up for the specific purpose of preventing them. If, as you argue, it is impossible for the United Nations to compel the Jews to respect the truce and revert to a position which would make the Bernadotte proposals workable, then the least it can do, if it is not to torpedo the entire basis of its existence, is to pass a resolution of moral condemnation against the Zionists and refuse to recognise any Jewish State set up in Palestine. For surely an admission of physical impotence coupled with a moral assertion of vital principle is better than the abject denial of all principle.

The last thing that Britain herself should do in such a situation—Britain who pledged her word to the Arabs thirty years ago that their rights and interests in Palestine would not be prejudiced by the establishment of the National Home—is to recognise a Jewish State set up, not by the United Nations, but by a series of violent moves breaking the United Nations truce, and calculated to defeat the proposals of the United Nations mediator. But quite apart from these moral considerations, the irresponsibility, from a practical point of view, of your advocacy of immediate British recognition of Israel is astonishing. What are the frontiers of the Jewish State you would have

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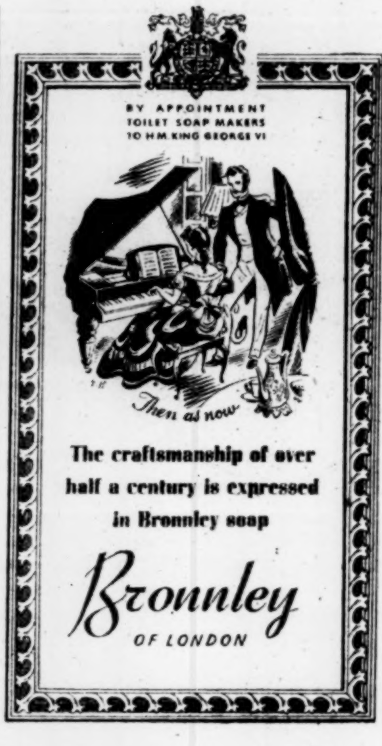

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Britain recognise? Are they the frontiers of the Partition resolution of November 29th last? Are they the frontiers of the Bernadotte plan? Do they include the Negeb as well as Western Galilee? And how much of the Negeb? Would they also include any future Arab territory in Palestine which the Zionists might decide to seize by force? Would not mere prudence suggest that you should wait until the territorial situation has gained some rigidity in order that you might know what precisely your recognition embraced and involved?

Logically and morally what Britain should do now, if the Zionists insist on defying the terms of the truce, the mediator's proposals, and the general authority of the United Nations, is not to recognise Israel, but to lift the embargo on supplies of arms to the Arab countries which she imposed in fulfilment of the truce conditions and by way of a contribution to a peaceful settlement to be achieved by the United Nations.

EDWARD ATIYAH

The Arab Office,
92 Eaton Place, London, S.W.1.

SIR,—By his solemn efforts to brand the young State of Israel as an aggressor and his demand for "sanctions" against this infant government our Uno delegate has surely brought the name of this country to the lowest level of degradation and hypocrisy.

Sir Alexander Cadogan raised no protesting squeal when the Arab nations and Egypt (which is not an Arab nation, anyway) refused to abide by the original Uno decision on partition, and not merely were these highly backward States liberally supplied with armaments for no other purpose than their declared intention of defying Uno, but we have actually been guilty of aggression ourselves *via* our puppet, Abdullah, and his henchman, Glubb. What would have been the attitude of the British delegate, it may be wondered, if, say, the Ukraine had demanded sanctions against Great Britain?

The truce in Palestine was never intended as a permanent *status quo*, and there can be no doubt in the correctness of the Israeli Government's attitude in ensuring that their Negeb settlements were free from potential attack, and in any case the still unaltered decision of the Assembly puts the Negeb area within the boundaries of Israel. We shall find, however, that Foreign Office officials are still engaged in the most sordid power politics (perhaps "Oil Politics" would be a better term) in order to reduce the boundaries of Israel to the lowest possible size, either by hook or by crook, but apparently the latter seems to be preferable.

H. WARSON

32 Gunton Road, Upper Clapton, E.5.

GERMAN CURRENCY REFORM

SIR,—The German currency reform had already had so much publicity that it is perhaps not surprising that so little attention seems to have been roused by the last devaluation, to which *The Times* of October 2nd devoted slightly less space than to that day's "census" of wildfowl. Yet this "fourth and final" law promulgated by Military Government is the most far-reaching in its implications of all the steps by which the German currency has been reformed, and as such deserves close scrutiny.

It is common knowledge that the first step was the payment to each individual, in two instalments, of a personal quota of 60 D. Marks against the surrender of 60 R. Marks, the old currency. All remaining R. Marks had to be paid into some bank or savings bank account, and all accounts were blocked. It is not nearly so well-known in England that 540 R.M. were deducted from all accounts to make up, with the 60 R.M. already surrendered, the purchase price of the 60 D.M. personal quota, and this was done for each member of the account-holder's family who had not an account of his own containing at least 540 R.M. In effect, therefore, there was no basic personal quota, as had been promised, except for those who possessed less than 600 R.M. on devaluation day.

But this was not the end. The remaining balance, if any—and the vast majority of savings bank accounts, particularly those of parents of families, were extinguished by the transaction—was converted into D. Marks at the same rate of 10 to 1; half of this new balance was, a few weeks later, put at the disposal of the owner in a "free" account, the other half remaining blocked.

The law of October 1st frees 20 per cent. of this blocked balance for immediate use and 10 per cent. for investment, and cancels the remaining 70 per cent.

The sacrifice of 90 per cent. of his nominal capital was accepted by the average German as a crushing, but necessary, price to be paid for a guaranteed stable currency, which would abolish the black market and set production going again. And this it has to a great extent already done. But now the new currency is found not to be altogether stable after all. At one stroke a large proportion of it is just cancelled. How much confidence can be felt in such a currency and such a Government?

According to the report in *The Times*, the decision was reached by the three Military Governors against the unanimous advice of the elected German representatives and the financial experts, who feared a further catastrophic rise in prices as a result of the sudden increase in purchasing power represented by the 20 per cent. of the blocked balances freed, and such a rise appears, in fact, already to have begun. This snub is, of course, by no means the first to be administered to the elected German governments, but it hardly seems the best way to educate the Germans to democracy.

Moreover, as *The Times* also points out, there has been large-scale borrowing on the security of blocked mark accounts, especially on the part of West German farmers, whose costs have risen greatly since the beginning of the currency reform. These loans have been jeopardised as a result of the cancellation of 70 per cent. of the security. And this is only one of the fields in which this apparently wanton action of the Military Governors will have disastrous results.

ELISABETH BAYLISS

Hungen, Oberhessen, U.S. Zone of Germany.

DEVELOPMENT AREA POLICY

SIR,—You seemed to be taking the White Paper on the Distribution of Industry very much at its face value when you commented that it "gives an encouraging interim report on one of the Government's most successful planning experiments."

The Paper claims that 250,000 more people are now at work, in the six scheduled Development Areas, than in 1939; and doubtless that, together with the fall in unemployment, is taken to be the gauge of the Government's success.

Now, in the White Paper on "Industry and Employment in Scotland, 1947" issued just a few months ago, a table shows that close on 77,000 more insured workers were in jobs in Scotland in mid-1947, as compared with mid-1939. That figure has been greatly quoted, by Mr. Arthur Woodburn, Secretary of State for Scotland, among others. But a cursory analysis shows that the increase is partly made up of 36,890 civil servants, 10,900 local government employees and 20,600 railway workers. Upon inquiry, it appears that the increase in the tabulated number of railway workers is due, not to any expansion of the service, but to the additional numbers coming under the insurance schemes. Since other classes of worker have come under the schemes since before the war, the increase in the number of workers in productive jobs in Scotland is only a few thousand.

That is a very poor result for the millions laid out on industrial estates. Myself, I believe that Scotland would have been further on the way to industrial recovery without the Development Area policy. In terms of location, of factory design and of choice of tenant the whole policy is non-functional and wasteful. These last few months, several of the major recruits to the Scottish "estates" have either had to be bolstered up, have collapsed, or have pulled out.

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SHIPOWNERS' PROBLEMS

THE Fifty-seventh Annual General Meeting of Furness, Withy and Co., Ltd., was held on October 29 in London.

Sir Ernest H. Murrant, K.C.M.G., M.B.E., the chairman, in the course of his speech, said: The profit on vessels' trading, plus agencies, stevedoring operations, finance, and other ancillary businesses of the company and its subsidiaries, after charging depreciation as well as provision for deferred repairs, amounts to £2,300,863. In addition there are dividends received on trade and other investments totalling £545,779, making a grand total of £2,846,642. The directors recommend a dividend of 8 per cent per annum, less tax, on the Ordinary share capital, the same as a year ago.

We have had to set aside no less than £1,696,385, the bulk of which represents United Kingdom taxation. Shareholders, who have provided the capital and who, because of the modest dividends which have been distributed in the course of the years, have acquiesced in the building up of reserves aggregating £12,000,000, receive only some £300,000. Superficially it may be that there is nothing much wrong with these figures, but I submit that the present basis of taxation is quite inequitable so far as shipping is concerned.

Shipping is the same hazardous business that it has always been. Huge war losses have pretty well been made good by the industry out of its own resources. What has been achieved has been achieved despite many discouragements. Our faith in the future is unbounded, but we need and must have sufficient overseas trade to keep the ships adequately employed both in our own interest and in the ultimate interests of the nation as a whole.

The Report was adopted.

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On the other hand, I can cite big expansion schemes which have been throttled by industrial estate policy. One big engineering concern with a steady production record for fifty years had to pigeonhole a major expansion plan because the Board of Trade announced the planting of an engineering factory almost next door, in an area where skilled labour reserves are limited. **David Murray**

38 Buchanan Drive,
Cambuslang, Lanarkshire.

NATIONAL SPECTACLES

Sir,—So much comment has been made on the rush of the public to avail themselves of the Ophthalmic Service of the New Health Service that I feel you might be interested in this comment from a very ordinary optician in a small town.

I am indeed very busy. My appointment book is filled several weeks ahead, but this is mostly because to give proper attention to each case I cannot deal with more than six or seven in a day. Ordering, office work and form filling occupy much time besides the refraction and later the fitting of spectacles.

As to the people availing themselves of the Service, the truth is as usual very simple. I have yet to meet the person who really wishes to wear spectacles. The ordinary person hates them and comes to us only when he knows he can avoid it no longer. Free spectacles therefore do not attract the public any more than free extraction of teeth. Actually, I am seeing a much higher percentage than usual of old age pensioners who could not previously afford spectacles. To add to this number there are the large number of people who waited in the few months before July 5th, knowing that they would obtain spectacles free after that date. Then again, people needing spectacles changed will not now hesitate so long because of the cost. The result is this great demand. Any decent person who could hear the conversations in my consulting room would feel that a good service was badly needed, and he would be very hard indeed if he was not touched by the gratitude of the old folks. **D. Ll. Harding.**

Swindon.

INCOME TAX SQUEEZE

Sir,—I believe the following experience of the peculiar and shady ways of our income-tax methods will be of interest not only to established writers and literary aspirants but to other readers of The New Statesman and Nation, as well.

In 1942 I began to write a book on Northern Europe (*The Northern Tangle*). As it dealt with the political development of five countries over a period of about a thousand years, it was a considerable undertaking and involved me in considerable expense. Owing to printing and binding difficulties it was not published until 1946.

When the claim for tax from the income from the book for 1946-47 was made, I was informed that I should not be allowed anything for expenses. The reason given was that, as the expenses had been incurred in previous years, they should have been claimed then, and not in 1946-47. The fact that, as a Civil Servant, my income-tax was deducted from my pay, and therefore I had nothing to lay the expense against, had apparently no bearing on the matter. The regulations are such as to authorise the tax collector legally to justify this monstrous imposition; so I have been compelled to pay the full amount. Thus, between expenses and income-tax, for this considerable job, undertaken with the support of my chiefs as an extra contribution to the war effort, in my spare time and under the great difficulties of the war years in London, I get next to nothing.

In normal life we should call this squeeze, though legal, morally a swindle. But I have had too much bitter experience of the British Treasury to imagine that the word "morality" has any meaning whatever where it is concerned. **Rowland Kenney**

Kingston.

THE LAW OF DEFAMATION

Sir,—As the case of *Hulton v. Jones* is quoted in the Report of the Committee of the Law of Defamation, it may be appropriate to mention certain facts which are not generally appreciated even by lawyers. Mr. Artemus-Jones (as he then was) did not sue the writer of the article containing the libel, who did not know him and who clearly had no intention to defame. (Subconscious memory probably accounted for his choice of name.) The action was brought against the proprietor of the newspaper, who *did* know the plaintiff, who read the article in proof, thought at first reading that it referred to the plaintiff, and yet allowed it to be published as it stood.

Bryn Gwyn, **Mildred Artemus-Jones**
Bangor, North Wales.

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

Sir,—Your correspondent, Mr. Richard Rumbold, protests at what he calls my "statement that (Lord Alfred Douglas's) condemnation of T. S. Eliot was due entirely to personal jealousy." My review contained no such statement nor any statement logically equivalent to this. I wrote: "Feeling himself neglected as a poet, Douglas spoke with venom of his well-known contemporaries." This is a very different statement, and there is ample evidence (in Mr. Freeman's book and elsewhere) of its truth.

Mr. Rumbold also says that my statement that "editors turned down" (Douglas's impossible manuscripts) is false. It is not false. I will gladly prove to Mr. Rumbold that editors *did* turn down Lord Alfred's manuscripts, for here again there is plenty of evidence.

I will not argue with Mr. Rumbold about what is "mean" or "querulous," for those are differences of value or opinion (or language?), but so far as he challenges the truth of my factual statements, I suggest that he has failed to substantiate his case.

Oxford. **Maurice Cranston**

THE B.O.P.

Sir,—In your issue of October 30, your reviewer of "Books in General," states that the *Boys' Own Paper* came into being in 1897. This is a mistake, for No. 1, Vol. 1, is dated January 18, 1879.

Charles Thomson

19, Neilsand Dr.,
Meikle Earnock,
Hamilton.

[We apologise for the misprint.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

MICE IN TREACLE

Sir,—Several readers of The New Statesman and Nation have queried the genuineness of the Chinese dish of new-born mice and treacle which constituted my entry for a recent week-end competition. May I assure them that it is an actual dish? Colonel P. T. Etherton, when British Consul General of Turkestan, was entertained at a Chinese banquet where this delicacy was served. My friend and fellow-competitor, Guy Innes (whose knowledge of such matters is recondite and encyclopædic) in giving me this information, adds that "the theory is that when the treacle dissolves, the mice scramble about in the stomach of the partaker, and help by their activities to digest the heavy food which is served—treading out the corn, as it were." **Allan M. Laing**

19 Wavertree Nook Road, Liverpool, 15.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Of all the variously horrid forms in which sentence of annihilation has been passed on famous writers, none seems more unjust than that reserved for Matthew Arnold who, during the spring of 1888, fell dead in a Liverpool street while running for a tramcar. The background, the occasion, the haste, the lack of dignity—all might have been contrived to make an inappropriate ending. It was as if the spirit of the 19th century, symbolised by a noisy mechanical juggernaut grinding towards the docks between shabby prosperous warehouses, had finally vanquished the gallant exponent of a less inharmonious order. But, though Arnold's life was a long and eloquent protest against contemporary social standards, that protest was delivered in his own way, with a moderation and even a kind of forebearance which set it apart from the comminations of other 19th-century critics. It bore no resemblance to Carlyle's hoarse cantankerous outcry—feelingly described in Arnold's most ambitious elegiac poem; and it showed no trace of the passionate exasperation, the tone of personal embitterment, that spoils much of Ruskin's later writing. Arnold retained his composure; and accounts of his conversation and physical appearance suggest a man with a gift for enjoyment and a belief in human happiness, who during his lifetime carried heavy burdens but did not always bear them gloomily. The late Logan Pearsall Smith, for example, once described how, on a tour of Germany, he had caught sight of the celebrated writer at a modest hotel dinner table. The young American was surprised and shocked; for he had expected, we understand, an air of solemn reverie, and Matthew Arnold's attitude was gay and almost flippant. Could *this* be the author of *Culture and Anarchy*? The gospel of sweetness and light had apparently been translated into a whiff of fragrant hair-oil. His waistcoat was far too conspicuous, his gloves somewhat too yellow, his abundant whiskers too ambrosial; he was conversing—and talking, Pearsall-Smith suspected, perhaps a shade too audibly—about a visit he had just paid to certain aged local princesses. The sceptical and dandified undergraduate, Lord Lansdowne's bright young secretary, had not completely vanished in the grave Inspector of Schools or been entirely obliterated by years of incessant toil and impecunious marriage. His prophetic voice might be the voice of Empedocles: in his personality there was still a lingering touch of Callicles

Touching thy harp as the whim came on thee,
And prais'd and spoil'd by master and by guests.

—which a generation of comfortless railway journeys, chilly gas-light classrooms and laborious official reports could never quite extinguish.

Does this elasticity betray a lack of profundity? Such, at least, has been the impression formed by some of Arnold's readers. "Of Matthew Arnold as a philosopher (wrote Herbert W. Paul in the 'English Men of Letters' series) it may be said that, though clear he was not deep, and that though gentle, he was not dull." The same criticism might be applied to his verse. Its beauty does not consist in the display of extreme originality: it contains no sudden tremendous glimpses into the life of man and nature: it has little of Tennysonian sweetness or stern Miltonic majesty. But at its finest it possesses a peculiar distinction; and, if we re-read Arnold without astonishment, the process usually includes some grateful re-discoveries. Given a properly receptive mood, we soon establish with the writer a close and sympathetic contact, echoing his plaints and subscribing to his aspirations:

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.

As the poet flits ahead like his own Scholar Gipsy, the reader follows where he chooses to lead, not, it is true, on a surge of wild enthusiasm, but inspired by a sedate confidence that the pursuit will be rewarding. The objective may be a trifle hazy, the line of flight eccentric; but there is much to admire in the cultivated undulations of the rich surrounding landscape.

Re-reading implies re-valuation; and a new selection of Arnold's verse, edited with an interesting preface by Mr. Clifford Dyment,* prompts a tentative review of its essential poetic worth. The editor does not make extravagant claims for Matthew Arnold's genius; but "among English reflective poets" Mr. Dyment asserts that he deserves to take a high place, adding that "what Bede wrote of the monk Caedmon is also apt for him: '. . . He whatsoever he could hear and learn would afterwards think upon the same again by himself, and chewing theron like a clean beast at his cud, would turn it into very sweet metre.'" To have been compared to a Saxon monk or to a placid beast of the field might well have puzzled Arnold; yet Bede's phrase is unexpectedly neat, and helps, moreover, to distinguish this reflective poet from another poet of reflection to whom he has been elsewhere, not unfairly, likened. Gray and Arnold were both of a meditative turn, both at variance with the world around them, but both restrained in the protests they uttered as they were disciplined in the lives they led. Neither of them was a bohemian, neither was a revolutionary: Arnold had his harmonious domestic, and his laborious, official career: Gray, his flowers and his friendships, his cultured correspondence and his sober academic home-from-home. But, whereas Gray discovered in his reflections a source of pure poetry, Arnold for the most part merely *reflected*, cogitating rather than creating, beautifully mirroring rather than transforming. Gray's influence on the younger poet, at times diffused, is at times extremely obvious; and, when it is most apparent, Gray benefits by the comparison, while Arnold loses half his charm. *To a Gipsy Child by the Sea-shore*, written in 1849, at once recalls Gray's ode. *On a Distant Prospect*:

The Guide of our dark steps a triple veil
Betwixt our senses and our sorrow keeps:
Hath sown with cloudless passages the tale
Of grief, and eas'd us with a thousand sleeps.
Ah! not the nectarous poppy lovers use,
Not daily labour's dull, Lethaeän spring,
Oblivion in lost angels can infuse
Of the soil'd glory and the trailing wing . . .

But how much more strongly flows Gray's verse, how much less turbid is its eloquence! And, where Arnold seems directly inspired by Gray, and the vision of the Eagle in the *Progress of Poesy*:

. . . Thy magic lulls the feathered king
With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

becomes a Pre-Raphaelite version of the bird of Jove:

And the Eagle, at the beck
Of the appeasing gracious harmony,
Droops all his sheeny, brown, deep-feather'd neck,
Nestling nearer to Jove's feet:
While o'er his sovereign eye
The curtains of the blue films slowly meet . . .

we perceive once again what the decline of the classical ideal had meant to English literature. Every detail that Arnold supplies seems to involve some loss of strength and sharpness. His vividness is the vividness of prose. The nice piece of observation with which he points his last line does not produce that sense of imaginative illumination which is one of the chiefest gifts of poetry.

Some of Arnold's faults are the faults of his age: others appear to be derived from his individual shortcomings, and to denote a sensibility which, although naturally acute, was also oddly intermittent. Of his shortcomings he was himself aware. The real reason, he wrote to his sister, why she found it impossible to enjoy all his poems equally was that "my poems are fragments—i.e., that I am fragments, while you are a whole; the whole effect of my poems is vague and indeterminate. . . ." Yes, his work is remarkably uneven. Here and there it is uncommonly bad—not bad, however, with the positive obstreperous badness of a Wordsworth or a Shelley, whose vices cry to heaven as loudly as their virtues, but with a negative badness, an inward emptiness and deadness. Then his verse becomes sententious and awkward:

Like children bathing on the shore,
Buried a wave beneath,
The second wave succeeds, before
We have had time to breathe.

or, as in *The Strayed Reveller*, laboriously matter-of-fact:

They see the Scythian
On the wide Stepp, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon.
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal,
Mares' milk, and bread
Bak'd on the embers:—all around
The boundless waving grass-plains stretch, thick-
starr'd
With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
And flag-leav'd iris flowers.

Here the reader who deprecates investigation into the personal lives of great men may ask himself whether we should not understand Arnold's talent more readily if we knew something of the mysterious early experience that produced the "Marguerite" poems. Whoever she was, whatever she gave, this unknown Frenchwoman, whom he met and loved in Switzerland, left behind her a poignant regret, a mood of nostalgia that coloured all his lyric verse. Loss and separation became dominant themes. Assuming that he had sighed as a lover, it is also clear that, even in Switzerland, he obeyed the call of Rugby. He submitted, but with passionate reservations; and those reservations contributed to the shaping of his whole poetic output. Arnold's position was not exceptional. We think of the Victorian Age as one of strenuous effort, of vigorous belief and of vigorous disbelief. Yet the most notable poems of the period are pitched in quite a different key; and Tennyson and Arnold are at their best, not when they gird up their loins to wrestle with an angel, but when, with a sigh of pagan despondency, they lie down among the Lotus Eaters. Their inclinations may be didactic; their masterpieces are elegiac. Their fortitude does not always impress, but their sensuous melancholy haunts us. *The Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis* are elegies; and Arnold's most successful short poem, *Dover Beach*, begins and ends in lamentation:

Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves suck back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

"The eternal note of sadness," working on a sanguine, generous, compassionate, if not profound, intelligence—there perhaps was the origin of Arnold's individual music. He was not so accomplished an artist as Tennyson; but the quality of his mind was very much more interesting. Tennyson interred his inward conflicts beneath a literary monument: Arnold's monument was fragmentary, but he never lost that tremor of youthful awareness, that susceptibility to exquisite pleasures and pains, which Tennyson, so far as we can judge, had by middle age discarded. Thus he remained disconcertingly young in a century which, as he watched, grew dull and old and self-complacent. He was half a pagan—but a pagan with spiritual leanings—in a world whose materialism had assumed the disguise of Christian orthodoxy. A pilgrim like his Scholar Gipsy, he was no more to be subdued or changed by circumstances than Glanvil's fabled wanderer—

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'[illegible]hes of the glade—
Far on the forest skirts, where none pursue . . .

Spiritual certainty was, no doubt, his goal; but it was not a condition he expected to achieve; and meanwhile the fascination of his pursuit was its apparent fruitlessness. There were consolations in the existence of the unfriended Scholar Gipsy not to be discovered in the organised excitement of any modern crusade.

Peter Quennell

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* *Matthew Arnold:* An Introduction and a Selection. By Clifford Dyment. *Phœnix House.* 8s. 6d.

STRONG, SINCERE, SAD

Arnold Bennett. By WALTER ALLEN. *Home & Van Thal.* 6s.

Arnold Bennett made so much money out of writing, cut such a splendid figure in public life and rebuked Mrs. Virginia Woolf (not to mention Einstein) in such terms that he was inevitably regarded with some coldness by the more austere sections of the novel-reading public. For more solid reasons he was rebuked by Henry James, who said that his novels were mere accumulations of information rather than works of art; and Mrs. Woolf herself went so far as to declare that he was more interested in the trappings of life than in life itself and that (a terrible charge) he never looked at human nature. How much truth is there in these two critical observations? How much justification is there for feeling, moreover, that Bennett's novels about the Five Towns (his best work) are saddening exercises in an outmoded tradition; or that, at the best, he had fused French naturalism with an English delight in eccentricity of character, added a certain amount of lore about the Potteries and so, without making any great contribution to literature, provided a satisfying record of Victorian provincial life?

In a sympathetic and well-balanced study Mr. Allen makes it quite clear that this would be to underestimate Bennett considerably. A writer deserves to be judged at his best. This is particularly to be remembered in the case of Bennett, who wrote such a mass of the unblushingly third rate, and it is one of the merits of Mr. Allen's little book that it loses no time in tidying away the worthless and allowing us a clear view of the novels that make up one of the most solid English literary achievements of the past fifty years: *Anna of the Five Towns, The Old Wives' Tale, Clayhanger, Those Twain,* and *Riceyman Steps.* After a short and revealing sketch of Bennett's career (in which he fails only to do justice to the novelist's kindness and generosity) Mr. Allen then proceeds to an examination of these novels. He draws out and illustrates Bennett's preoccupation with time, death and money, he has some interesting things to say on the novelist as an extrovert—of which Bennett was an extreme type—he points out that, in portraying the Five Towns, Bennett has rendered "a certain kind of community at a certain point in time" and not, as did Thomas Hardy in a comparable field, the eternal human situation. It is impossible to quarrel with Mr. Allen's assessments of the novels except, perhaps, in the case of *Riceyman Steps,* where he may have erred on the side of kindness; and his final verdict that Bennett "recreated normal existence with a scrupulous fidelity which has never been surpassed and with an honesty and humanity which convince us entirely of the justice of his presentation" is one to command respect.

But let us not be puffed up. All this would weigh very little with either Henry James or Mrs. Woolf. As Mr. Allen points out, however, James was implicitly condemning all novels that were not of the kind he wrote himself, and he was temperamentally incapable of a balanced appraisal of Bennett's work. This is said in neither praise nor blame of the two novelists. But when, fresh from a reading of Bennett's best work, we come across Mrs. Woolf's charge that "he never looked at human nature" we realise that here is a clear case of right or wrong. And who, with any impartiality, can deny that Mrs. Woolf was wrong?

In the first place, Mr. Allen reminds us, Bennett was looking at human nature so closely that he was the first to give a balanced account of its workings in the new industrial scene. This was for the simplest of reasons. Unlike Dickens and Benjamin Disraeli, to whom the industrial north and midlands were strange and in some ways frightening phenomena, Bennett thought of them (during his formative years, at any rate) as home. Mr. Allen has some good paragraphs on Bennett's indebtedness to the scene of his upbringing and how his apprenticeship to the French naturalists enabled him to make use of the wealth he had inherited; but, no matter what books he read, the power of his own largely depends on the one quality Mrs. Woolf would deny him, a passionate belief in "the interestingness of existence," and an unexcited and exact understanding of that interplay of motive and frustration which makes up human nature.

It was this quality that led him to his best writing. Time and time again the effect of his somewhat parochial pessimism about human affairs is dissipated by a reminder of his shrewd grasp of reality, a brilliantly observed conversation perhaps, or some turn in the narrative that goes counter to the reader's expectations and delights by its unquestionable rightness. When Dora (in Maria Edgeworth's *Ormond*) went off to Paris from the wilds of Ireland she became the brilliant and fashionable Mme de Connal; and who can doubt that Hardy's Eustacia would, had she been given the chance, have become more Parisienne than the Parisiennes? Yet the impulsive and romantic Sophia (in *The Old Wives' Tale*) becomes, in the words of Mr. Allen, "provincial of the provincial, essentially of the Five Towns"—and how solidly we see her against the French background as a result, and how unquestionably that is just what would have happened!

There is one other aspect of Bennett's ability on which one would have liked Mr. Allen to have said more. Bennett is one of the first and finest interpreters of the inarticulate character—not the Dickens' fantastic or the "dumb ox" character we find in certain modern novels—but the passionate, frustrated and very English man or woman for whom words, and even actions, are the inadequate outer signs. Examine once more the extraordinary conversation between Mrs. Baines and Povey when he asks to marry Constance. There is something more in this conversation than comedy. It is for work of this kind that the utterly dissimilar D. H. Lawrence accorded Bennett his "grudging respect."

But within the space at his disposal Mr. Allen has done wonders. If one did not understand before just what Mr. E. M. Forster meant when he said of Bennett's work that it was "strong, sincere, sad," one understands it now.

P. H. NEWBY

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I sometimes wonder where the novelist would be without the device of the "month in the country"—the rustic interlude that changes one's whole outlook, that leaves the principal character packing into his spiritual baggage things which he had never set out with so gaily from the metropolis, so long and yet so short a time before. The device has advantages almost inexhaustible. A framework strong yet adjustable falls to hand; within it is room for dialectic, satire, violent action, even the picaresque; and above all, the characters impinge upon each other with an economy of words no urban setting would allow. A crunch of wheels on gravel, the barking of some neurotic poodle mingled with the squeals of delighted children, and presto! there is Uncle Fedor, or Patrice of Mr. Antrobus exploding among us for better or worse.

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Of course, the formula demands an upper-class society, if not downright prosperous as in Peacock and most of Turgenev, at least capable still of shabby state, as in Gide's *Isabelle*. Here is perhaps the valediction on the whole device, for Europe anyway. It will be interesting, and I suspect a trifle melancholy, during the next few years to observe the effect upon our culture of the death of country-house society. Meanwhile, a *Crome Yellow* or a *Gryll Grange* is no longer conceivable here. Mrs. Wimbush's world is as dead as the Urbino of *Il Cortegiano*. Only on the American continent can one still hope to find the settled incomes that permit the atmosphere, at once speculative, erotic and petulant, of the true country-house novel.

Within this formula Mr. Lionel Trilling, with *The Middle of the Journey*, brilliantly succeeds. Indeed, he succeeds to the point of isolating himself from the run of modern American novelists. Behind the close-packed wall of its proficiency, *The Middle of the Journey* stands a trifle lonely, like the conversationalist who ends by frightening away. Yet it is a dazzling achievement which penetrates far deeper into the dilemma of these days than is generally the habit.

John Laskell, gentle, kind, solvent without effort, is a housing expert, a sort of minor Lewis Mumford, in those promising 'thirties, when for a moment it looked as if the intelligent leisured classes of America were about to turn into a Liberal Governing Class. Laskell has nearly died of scarlet fever. (His convalescence is as good a piece of satire and observation as one could want. Who has not known Nurse Paine, nor suffered from the sexy gentilities of Nurse Debry?) Laskell is just recovered enough to take refuge with his dear, prosperous, Liberal, politically conscious friends, Arthur and Nancy Croom, in Connecticut; but then that demi-god Gifford Maxim—and Mr. Trilling most adroitly conveys a sense of the man's tragic semi-divinity—comes to announce that he has left the Communist Party. The implications of Maxim's defection, the liberal day-dreams ruined by Maxim's contention that his life is now in danger from his former cronies pursue Laskell mercilessly to the country. They spoil his friendship with the admirable Arthur Croom, and his admirably priggish Nancy, and land Laskell, just when Maxim has turned up as one of the milder Eumenides, in a tragedy all the more poignant for its encircling vapours of silliness and arty-crafty taste. Laskell's conflict with the Crooms pushes him into an affair with Emily Caldwell. Emily alone would justify the whole novel; it is a feat of the highest accomplishment to have created in her a woman ridiculous for her dated enthusiasms, her stale jargon of Greenwich Village, her absurd "folksy" salad-bowls; and yet a warm, glowing Demeter, a creature infinitely more worthy of desire than the equally well-drawn, earnest, well-intentioned intolerant Nancy, with her maddening faith in the future. Emily has a drunkard-lecher of a husband, Duck, in whom the Crooms hasten to adulate certain primeval virtues; and a child Susan, with a weak heart, who is inadvertently killed by her drunken father. He was enraged because she had fluffed a Blake recitation at the Church Bazaar.

But she fluffed her lines and therefore died, because Laskell tried to cure her of the absurd mannerism in which her mother had taught her to recite. The child's death becomes Laskell's private responsibility, in the same way as every misery provoked by Communism has the capacity to pierce the vast cloudy heart of Maxim. This doctrine of responsibility—the point where Christianity and Communism are least opposed—contrives to make *The Middle of the Journey* unexpectedly moving in an age when the Anglo-Saxon novel tends to disregard the tragic riddles that haunt our every dawn.

Nor can one ignore Mr. Trilling's gift for unfurling character. During the last century at least, it has been the habit of most English novelists—and American ones for that matter—to present their puppets as ready-made "cards," hard and inflexibly formed as chocolate caramels. Take Mr. Strong's *Trevannion*, for instance. The boxer, the old ruffian of a central character, the little maid who falls madly in love with that unfresh old monster—they all spring fully armed from the author's head, exhibiting every unchanging detail of their accoutrement on the first pages of their appearance. Whereas the nauseating priggishness of Mr. Trilling's Nancy, the touching if ridiculous charm of Emily, are slowly, almost slily, revealed. Possibly one could with fairness accuse Mr. Trilling's writing of some anaemia, more lingering than pernicious; the microscopic analysis of every gesture, or every vocal inflexion may in the end exhaust one—but not before one has been profoundly stimulated, even renewed.

No doubt, Mr. Steinbeck is one of the most accomplished narrators in our time; and these days the dying gift of narrative is not to be despised. His latest work, a short parable called *The Pearl* is a commendably spare piece of story-telling. Returning to the world approximately of *Tortilla Flats*, it recounts the misfortunes of a Mexican peon when faced with the prospect of wealth. A pearl-fisher living on the Gulf is quietly eating his breakfast when he sees a scorpion bite his baby, Coyotito. The distracted couple appeal vainly for aid to the local doctor—the usual portrait of a heartless Mexican capitalist which seemed all right in Eisenstein's day, but now strikes one as hardly less strange than Henry Wallace's picture of an imperialist England. Having without knowing it already cured Coyotito by their simple native remedy, a sea-weed poultice, the fisherman and his wife go out pearl-fishing, in the hope of luck bringing them enough to pay the doctor's fees.

But their luck is too good. The father finds a pearl of fabulous size and beauty. At once evil closes in upon them; thieves burn their house, drive the fisherman to murder; the unfortunate, fortunate couple fly with Coyotito by night in an attempt to reach Mexico City, and there sell the pearl. They are followed by trackers and killers—this is the best part of the book. The fisherman kills all three of his tormentors, but in the struggle Coyotito also dies. The mother carrying the bloody bundle of their little son on her head, the couple return to their town, and throw the jewel, now grown odious even for the fisherman, back into the sea.

An effective, if not entirely original, theme. But three-quarters of one's pleasure in it is offset by the desperate archaism and the portentous reflections of his prose. The continued misuse of the conjunction "and" with which to start a sentence: phrases such as: "a town is a thing like a colonial animal," "a school of great fishes dove in. . ." Why must so sensitive an artist as Mr. Steinbeck, just because he writes of peasants, employ this patronising, semi-Biblical jargon? He is not, after all, Miss Pearl Buck.

For long I have dreamed of writing a novel about an abandoned watering-place. I could see, as much as though they were already fixed to paper, my characters moving frustrated and haunted down the empty beaches, peering into the deserted Casino. In *A Man of Talent* Miss Elisabeth Kyle has forestalled me, but confirms my faith in the formula. Within its limits, this is a book of the happiest invention. The white turkeys, the bells of Lady Flex's villa ringing across the Norman dunes, the claustrophobic pride and shifts of the Lechat family—here is a talent that might with profit have been employed upon a story more substantial and less involved.

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Evidently put on her mettle by *Forever Amber* Miss Vicki Baum in *Headless Angel* creates a heroine whose wantonness is no less determined and efficient than the diversions of pre-Hitlerian Berlin. Possibly this fantasia of illicit love in Germany and Mexico at the close of the eighteenth century may enliven the winter evenings of some. Personally I prefer my erotica "straight" and without the trappings of Wardour Street.

SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH

CHINESE PAINTING

Chinese Painting. By WILLIAM COHN. *Phaidon Press.* 30s.

Principles of Chinese Painting. By GEORGE ROWLEY. *Oxford University Press.* 4 *gns.*

Two hundred plates, a hundred pages of illustrated text—Dr. Cohn has achieved a miracle of compression, and his style of writing is easy to follow. Mr. Rowley's is more complex, but it is highly stimulating. Unlike Dr. Cohn, he does not attempt to co-ordinate Chinese art and Chinese history. His forty-eight plates, with two in colour, are not drawn from all over the world, as are Dr. Cohn's, but from one American collection; but their quality is excellent, and each is lavishly annotated, with references to condition. Both books are first-rate works of scholarship, worthy respectively of Oxford and Princeton.

Following the example of Ernst Grosse, whose work he once edited, Dr. Cohn does not deny us enlarged photographs of detail. This is especially useful in pl. 94–6, "The Myriad Miles on the Yangtze," shown in London in 1936. Surely no one can now think the handling is beautiful; the washes, so well managed in other well-known works in this style, are here not even tidy; there are hideous strokes of tapering fish-like form, unparalleled elsewhere (pl. 95); the water lines (pl. 94) are weak and ugly. This style is much better understood in Japan than in China, where it soon almost died out. Modern artists like the late Mr. Hashimoto Gaho practised it with skill. It is not surprising, therefore, that the chief opponent of this picture should have been Professor Yukio Yashiro. Dr. Cohn does not commit himself, but rightly offers us a chance to judge. Naturally the "Myriad Miles" was admired; it showed the typical clear layout and square, logical brushwork of this school well enough, and was no doubt based on tracings from original compositions. As a document it was valuable; only quality was lacking. In the lovely little picture by Tai Chin (Breuer collection) this was seen to perfection. On this artist Dr. Cohn writes especially well.

It is difficult to apply the language of European art-criticism to Chinese painting. Hence the value of Mr. Rowley's series of essays on Chinese art-terms, discussed against the background of a keenly felt familiarity with Western art of all dates. Dr. Cohn has had to use the convenient shorthand of terms like "Baroque" with much less room in which to explain their application, but the skill with which he keeps his story varied and interesting is much to be admired, especially as he has denied himself the aid of the anecdotes and epigrammatic opinions in which Chinese art-literature seems to abound.

Mr. Rowley has made effective use of Chinese "painter's shop," though it is not till the later periods that "pure painting," as opposed to illustration, seems to have been the main consideration. The now unobtainable two volumes, in English, of *A History of Later Chinese Painting*, by Dr. O. Sirén, deal fully with these periods, the interest of which is that they embody traditions now already for some hundreds of years followed by Chinese painters and by such great artists of recent Japanese history as Buson and Taiga in the eighteenth century, and Tomioka Tessai in the twentieth. Mr. Waley in 1923 directed attention to the subject, but in vain; the British Museum, having already in 1915 given £775 (with N.A.C.F. aid) for one dim antique, bought another about fifteen years later for £3,250.

Both are left in tactful oblivion by Dr. Cohn's book, which illustrates several fine things of a less ambitious kind from the British Museum; several are now on view.

The Mecca of those who prefer genuine pictures in fair condition to ambitious classics is now Stockholm, with Paris a good second. Japan and China are an unattainable paradise; America is rich in fine early pictures, but has not so far much favoured the modern styles which began roughly in the fourteenth century and are still practised in China and Japan. Dr. Cohn, who has the temperament of an antiquarian and whose footnotes alone are a mine of learning, thinks (p. 87) that "only the highlights deserve consideration" during the last five hundred years. Perhaps; but which are they? The examples chosen by Dr. Cohn are excellent in their way, but they favour most the careful exquisite work which represents the professional and academic side of the later periods. In China and Japan an equal, if not indeed greater, importance is attached to the freer styles. In China, as in Europe, there are many who think that it is not necessarily the academics and professionals who best understand the true spirit of the old masters. The Chinese, for instance, have long greatly admired Hsü Wei, whose "Four Seasons" from Stockholm attracted as much attention at Burlington House as the Breuer Tai Chin, and the fine early landscape (pl. 24) in Mr. Rowley's book. Dr. Cohn omits him entirely; nor does he treat Yün Nan-t'ien much better, repeating, as he does, the curious oversight by which Mr. Waley confused him with Shên Nan-pin.

These are minor points in a book of such large comprehension. Dr. Cohn sets out to give us a broad view of a vast field. His long experience, his wonderful collection of photographs, especially from American sources, his sound connoisseurship, his profound background of general art-historical culture, make him an ideal exponent of a theme hitherto unfamiliar to English art-lovers, but now, at thirty shillings, available, one hopes, to the large public which enjoyed the Burlington House Exhibition of 1936. They will here meet a few of their favourites again, with much more that is quite unknown to any but specialists.

W. W. WINKWORTH

SOVIET EDUCATION

"I Want to be Like Stalin." Translated by GEORGE C. COUNTS and NACIA P. LODGE. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Russia Goes to School. A Guide to Soviet Education. By BEATRICE KING. *New Education Book Club.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The rulers of the U.S.S.R. agree with Plato that Communism demands a deliberately planned educational system designed to make every citizen accept without question the established doctrines of the State and willingly to play his part in fulfilling all the purposes of its leaders. An authoritative directive from Stalin and his closest associates in the Politburo has from time to time laid down for all schools throughout the Soviet Union—no experimental deviations are possible—what all Russian teachers will inculcate into all their pupils. Only one attitude is admissible towards rulers and country, towards property, towards parents, teachers and fellow pupils. There is an obvious parallel here with Roman Catholic countries such as Spain; where the Vatican is in undisputed possession, Authority settles all those topics of politics, of life and religion, which in Protestant countries

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are controversial. The contrast, however, between education in the authoritarian and the democratic States is not as great as liberal theorists sometimes pretend; public and private schools in England and America also teach a system of morality which includes plenty of patriotism and an orthodox attitude towards property and social institutions. But there is [illegible] vital difference. Not only are heretical schools permitted in the democracies, but, far more important, ideas which undermine the accepted orthodoxies are in general circulation, so that a child brought up, say, as a Strict Baptist, with an unquestioning belief in private enterprise, may read, as soon as he gets the appetite, every type of subversive literature and become perhaps a Marxist, atheist or anarchist.

In *Russia Goes to School*, Mrs. Beatrice King, herself of Russian origin, provides "a guide to Soviet education" based on a serious study of the theory and structure of Russian schooling. She has not visited Russia since the war, and admits that her present book, which describes the system rather than its application, may suggest that "the Soviet system works perfectly." Certainly she stresses the happiness and common sense of Soviet schools; she gives illustrations from her own experience of the way in which difficult cases are handled; she includes, I think unwisely, idyllic photographs of Soviet schoolchildren and peasants which look more like cinema stills than convincing snapshots of reality. Her book contains a mass of useful information about the types of Soviet schools, their curricula, and day-by-day organisation. Its weakness is that she almost totally omits discussion of the content and substance of what is taught. And this is what we most want to know. To be told how many hours are devoted to history lessons is far less useful than to learn what slant is given to the history when it is taught. We gain more insight into this crucial question from another, shorter book which tells us what orders the Politburo gives to Soviet teachers.

"*I Want to be Like Stalin*" is the title given to the translation of a Soviet textbook officially approved for the training of school-teachers. Much is expected of the teacher. Principles are laid down for him. Stress is put upon attention to the needs of the individual child, upon the most enlightened way of dealing with the lazy or intractable. No corporal punishment is allowed in Russia. Emphasis is laid upon service and cooperation and on the encouragement of children to find out things for themselves. Education is made part of Soviet life; it is, as Mr. Counts says in his introduction, intensely "social"; it seeks to make every child personally aware of the problems of his country; it emphasises the equality of races and nationalities, devotion to the common good, respect for the weak and the aged, love of family and friends and neighbourhood and motherland. These admirable principles must be understood in their Soviet setting. They are combined with intense patriotism, constant reminders of the unique greatness of Stalin, and a deliberately falsified picture of the world outside the Soviet Union. Mr. Counts gives us an illuminating example of the way in which all references to the part played in the war against the Nazis by any country except Russia have been, stage by stage, taken out of Soviet educational books. In this teacher's manual it is laid down that "the pupil of the Soviet school must realise that the feeling of Soviet patriotism is saturated with irreconcilable hatred towards enemies of the Socialist society." Only in classless Russia is there any moral relation between citizens. "The discipline of the whip" harmonises with the feudal discipline of labour, while "the capitalist organisation of production rests on the discipline of hunger. In either case discipline is placid and absolute"—a statement which would seem at variance with other Soviet propaganda, which depicts the West as a constant scene of riot and bloodshed in which the workers are every day trampled down by the capitalist police.

It will be seen, as Mr. Counts says, that Soviet education represents a remarkable synthesis of Marxism and patriotism. I am told by one who has read this textbook in the original Russian that its militaristic impact is enhanced by some mistranslations, such as "uniforms" for "school clothes." No such errors, however, could affect the overwhelming impression that while the Soviet child is being brought up to be, in a very real sense, a good comrade in relation to other loyal Soviet citizens, he is also expected to denounce disloyal or dubious comrades, and to regard the outside world, apart from overseas Communists, as consisting entirely of enemies. Marxism believes in a ceaseless war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and it is therefore logical that its educational system should be continuously propagandist. Even in time of war bourgeois States are never as propagandist as this. When the war is over democracies relapse into habits of peace; we begin again to tell the truth about ourselves as well as about our friends and recent enemies. But in the U.S.S.R., leading the vanguard in the struggle for world peace, world Communism and world brotherhood, no child may learn to love the potential enemies of Russia; no child may be told any truth that might soften his will to destroy them. Mr. Counts explains that "I Want to be Like Stalin" is the Soviet equivalent of "I want to be like Jesus," since there is a religious significance in Stalin-worship. But it would be equally true to say that it is the equivalent of "I want to be like Drake, or Nelson, or Winston Churchill," or whoever stands in the public mind as the saviour of the country from the barbaric invader. The difference is that Stalin does not fall from office when the war is over, because the war cannot, in the Marxist nature of things, be over until all the world is Communist and all possible class enemies have been finally destroyed. When that day comes the Soviet child will of course have to love everyone. KINGSLEY MARTIN

KLAUS MANN ON ANDRÉ GIDE

Andre Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought. By KLAUS MANN. *Dennis Dobson.* 15s.

It is perhaps ironical that the first full-length book to appear in this country on the most important of living French writers should have been written by a German for Americans. (I believe it first appeared in the U.S.A. in 1943.) Thomas Mann's son Klaus Mann is already well known as an able writer. An interesting letter to him from M. Gide, which is reproduced in facsimile, is full of charming compliments. All the omens are favourable. Alas! Herr Klaus Mann, though obviously intelligent and full of information, is at bottom merely a vulgariser. An exile not only from his native land but also from his native language, he has taken to American journalese as a duck to water. He writes this idiom with the greatest virtuosity, but has not yet mastered the *tone* of English. Montaigne becomes "the lusty nobleman," a blind girl "a sightless belle," and Gide himself "praises the rapture of amative potency."

The book is made up of a kind of lyrical biography of Gide interspersed with accounts of the plots of his novels, paraphrases of his ideas and occasional personal reminiscences. Undeniably it contains some interesting material and some shrewd remarks. The descriptions of Gide's friends and background will interest many readers of his *Journal*. There is a lively account of his relations with Claudel and the Roman Catholics and also of his attitude to Proust. The importance of Whitman to Gide is rightly

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stressed, though I think Kierkegaard's is overrated and Valery's under-estimated. There are some queer inaccuracies. For instance, M. Gide is made a "Royal Academician!" The worst, however, have luckily been expunged from this edition. The unfortunate Communist episode, in which Gide for a time mistook the Stalinist bureaucratic state for true Communism and Communism itself for a purified form of Christianity, is vividly described with illuminating quotations.

All this, however, does not make up for the absence of real criticism. Moreover, the tone of intimate, yet patronising adulation, in which the book is written reminds one irresistibly of those short-sighted talkers who thrust their faces into other peoples', pouring forth a stream of words and occasionally, quite unconsciously, spitting on their unfortunate victims.

André Gide has liberated himself (and many other people) from stifling and grotesque tabus. He has followed his inward bent deliberately and ardently, not with facile hedonism but through difficulties and dangers. It is this that makes his voice so moving, his appeal so irresistible. And so when Herr Klaus Mann slaps him on the back, calling him "André" or "the old man" or "the extraordinary old boy," winking and pointing a coy finger now at the "Arabian lads," now at "Emmanuèle" (which he seems to think was Mme Gide's name), one can hardly repress a shudder.

The climax comes when, during the war, Herr Klaus Mann across the Atlantic, is granted a miraculous vision. The "old man," sitting "alone, dreaming in a quaint, plush-covered armchair, on the terrace of a modest Provençal villa," appears to him in the twilight. And not only does he see M. Gide but divines his inmost thoughts, which take the form of an extraordinary rigmarole (faintly reminiscent, alas, of Goethe's great monologue in *'Lotte in Weimar'*). This is placed by Herr Klaus Mann in inverted commas so that the unwary may be trapped into thinking that—for instance: "Please stop believing in gaps! If you drift or slip, don't think that everything goes downhill from now on. Life travels upwards in spirals, etc., etc.," is really by Gide. It is not. Although there are doubtless some quotations and paraphrases in the monologue, it belongs, together with the modest villa and its plush furniture, to Herr Klaus Mann. "How curious all this is! how real!" he exclaims, as he contemplates the scene. Curious undoubtedly—but scarcely real. The same might be said of the whole book.

J. S. BUSSY

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

SYMPHONIES: Beethoven: *Ninth* (Schwarzkopf/Höngen/Patzak/Hotter/Chorus of The Friends of Music/Vienna Philharmonic/Karajan, LX1097-1105); Mozart: *No. 38 in D Major* ("Prague"—K504) (Suisse Romande/Ansermet, K1812-4); Prokofieff: "Classical" Symphony (Paris Conservatoire/Münch, K1756-7). The first of these issues fulfils most of our hopes. In all the movements except the Scherzo Karajan favours a slightly slower tempo than Weingartner; in the first a pretty rigid metronome 66, as against Weingartner's 76 and Beethoven's 88. Karajan's accents are splendidly incisive and the proud climaxes frighten—as they should. I wish only that the woodwind gossip had been allowed to buttonhole us more maliciously. In the C major passage of the Scherzo Wagner's additional brass is (rightly, I think) omitted. The Adagio is a model of *legato* playing. The D major theme is rather heftily delivered, on its first appearance; but the tone is lovely and the serene happiness of the whole movement beautifully conveyed. In the Finale Miss Schwarzkopf is entirely adequate, but after listening to Hans Hotter's jerky and unmusical solo one sighs for the Richard Mayr of the Weingartner set. The "Turkish" section (B flat) starts much too loud. Otherwise this very testing movement is extremely well managed: the balance is excellent and the chorus never drowns the orchestra. The engineers discover a beautiful acoustic for the choral sections, which have a celestial ring. The latest issue of the "Prague" Symphony is a good example of Ansermet's selfless conducting. He takes much the same view as Beecham of phrasing and tempi, except in the Finale, where his quicker beat results in some loss of definition, especially in the flute passages. But I prefer Ansermet's less emphatic conduct of the Andante, and the recording shows up the rather low relief of the Beecham set. The Decca surface is unusually heavy. Koussevitzky's performance of Prokofieff's "Classical" Symphony still remains unrivalled. The Münch set is a good deal better than were the last two (Mitropoulos and Celibadache): the tempi are perfect and we hear far more of the inner parts and decorative detail than ever before. But neither wit nor humour disengage themselves from this rather dry recording.

CONCERTOS: Beethoven: *Fourth in G Major* (Clara Haskil/LPO/Zecchi, K1944-7); Haydn: *Violin Concerto in C* (Goldberg/Philharmonia/Süsskind, RO20558-60); Bach: *Brandenburg Concerto No.* 5 (Long/Grinke/Morris/Boyd Neel Orch., K1889-91); *Ditto,* Nos. 2 and 5 (Boston Symph./Koussevitzky/Soloists, DB6764-7); Saint-Saëns: *Cello Concerto in A Minor,* op. 33 (Fournier/Philharmonia/Süsskind, DB6602-3); Liszt: *Hungarian Fantasia* (Solomon/Philharmonia/Süsskind C3761-2). The Decca set of Beethoven's Fourth Concerto fails badly on the score of recording. Miss Haskil plays the solo with style and dexterity, though without much poetic feeling; but the orchestra is impossibly dim and very light on bass. The string unison in the Andante has no impact at all, the D major tune in the Rondo no warmth; in the first movement the orchestra's dealings with the thematic material are drowned in piano figuration. The Schnabel set (HMV) wins hands down. It is pleasant to be able to welcome the return of Parlophone to serious music (in the old RO numbers). The Violin Concerto in C major is the only one of the three attributed to Haydn which is incontestably authentic. The first movement might be thought dull, but the soaring cantilena of the Andante is in the composer's best style, and the Mozartian Finale is most exhilarating. Simon Goldberg takes the technical features for granted and plays with unfailing beauty of tone. The recording is perhaps a little over-exuberant, but the disc surface is excellent. The two latest *Brandenburg* issues differ enormously in acoustic effect. Decca collects orchestra and soloists into a small, damped room. One hears everything very clearly, and since the soloists are outstandingly good, this is agreeable in one way, but finally rather too brittle. Koussevitzky's ensemble seems miles away, at the other end of a large concert hall. The loss of intimacy is considerable, though the additional resonance is an advantage; but the soloists never emerge sufficiently. At the beginning of the Second Concerto the Boston trumpeter attempts to play, as written, a passage which is nowadays impossibly high; the result is a frantic squeal. In the recent Boyd Neel set Mr. Eskdale very sensibly plays the notes an octave lower—and gets them right. Both performances employ a piano in place of a harpsichord. This is to my taste an improvement, though I have no space here to explain why. On balance, then, I recommend the Boyd Neel sets. In the earlier of Saint-Saëns' two Cello Concertos Pierre Fournier plays with dignity and perfect understanding of how to make the most of this empty and facile, but extremely well written music. The balance is very competently held, but I find the tone deteriorates somewhat towards the centre of the disc. Solomon gives a stunning performance—the best I ever heard—in the *Hungarian Fantasia:* a ferocious record, brilliantly made. In this disreputable piece Liszt uses some of the same themes as appear in the orchestral *Rhapsody No.* 1, issued by Columbia this month in the usual harsh Philadelphia recording.

MISCELLANEOUS ORCHESTRAL: Gluck: *Alceste* Overture (Liv. Phil./Sargent, DX1508); Weber: *Der*

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Freischütz Overture (N.B.C./Toscanini, DB6331); Berlioz: *Le Carnaval Romain* (Philharmonia/Dobrowen, C3709); Berlioz: *The Corsair* (Paris Conservatoire/Münch, K1948); Strauss: *The Gipsy Baron* Overture (LPO/Kleiber, K1954); Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1 in F minor* (Philadelphia/Ormandy, LX1107); Franck: *Les Eolides* (Philharmonia/Galliera, DX1507). Sir Malcolm Sargent fails to make anything of the overture to Gluck's *Alceste*. A dull, pedestrian job, this. Now that Sir Adrian Boult's version has been deleted no satisfactory modern record of this lofty and inspiring piece is available. For a different reason I must warn readers about the new *Freischütz* overture. Recorders of Toscanini set a very high standard in nasty sound, and admittedly this is not one of their worst efforts; but the balance is wrong and the tone throughout hopelessly unrealistic. A vivid performance shamefully spoilt. The Philharmonia/Süsskind recording remains the most satisfactory. The latest *Carnaval Romain* and *Corsair* issues have serious rivals in De Sabata and Beecham; I strongly advise readers not to rely entirely on me in this case, for the choice depends largely on the type of gramophone you happen to use. In *Carnaval Romain* the Augusteo violins are superior to those of the Philharmonia, but the new recording is deeper and easier on the ear, not so nervous and violent as De Sabata's; the score is clearer and there is more of it. I can't pretend that the more boisterous sections of *The Corsair* sound agreeable in either version. This is one of Decca's comb-and-tissue-paper recordings; but the vitality of the performance—its whirlwind extravagance—is not inferior to Beecham's, and the distortion on side two is less serious. For *The Gipsy Baron* I continue to prefer the recent Columbia issue. The new record has its virtues, but it lacks the weight and warmth of the Vienna Philharmonic's strings, and its feeling for the theatre. The important oboe solo is slightly, but distinctly, under pitch. The first English recording of *Les Eolides* is admirably clear, but the tone is spiky and acid, and deteriorates badly in the last inch of side one. A pity, for this is one of Franck's most successful orchestral pieces and the performance is tense and passionate. So let us agree to forgive the faults of the recording. By the way, when are we to have Franck's exquisite *Les Djinns*? Dame Myra Hess plays the solo part to admiration and the piece would, I imagine, go on to one record.

CHAMBER MUSIC, PIANO SOLO, and ORGAN: Schubert: *Piano Trio in B flat*, op. 99 (Trio di Trieste, C3792-5); Beethoven: *Violin Sonata in G major*, op. 96 (Rostal/Osborn, K1950-3); Beethoven: *Sonata in E major*, op. 109 (Denis Matthews, DX1509-11); Ravel: *Ondine* (Monique Haas, K1888); Poulenc: *Suite*—"Napoli" (Rubinstein, DB6614); Bach: *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* (Germani, C3791); Bach: *Prelude and Fugue in A minor* (Marcel Dupré, K1949). The Trio di Trieste is an eminent ensemble, but it was not, I think, a happy choice for Schubert's *Trio in B flat*, a work which demands poetry and nervous strength as well as sheer efficiency from the players. Despite its age, the Cortot-Thibaud-Casals recording is still unsurpassed for fire, tenderness and authority. It is true that in the new set the Andante is a beautiful piece of playing, but the opening movement lets us down with a bang. The components of the triplet figure are not given their full value; there is a disastrous (though obviously intentional) hesitation within the bar; and the tempo is most unsteady. The balance is good, but the recording has not dealt agreeably with the violin tone. Not recommended. Nor is the Rostal/Osborn set of Beethoven's last Violin Sonata, which is still available in an all but perfect rendering by Simon Goldberg and Lili Kraus (Parlophone). This wonderful work requires an intimacy of feeling, a delicacy and restraint, which are to seek in the new set. The performance is much too forceful and heavy, and the tone at times most unpleasant. The pretty but trifling *Rondo in G major*, which occupies side eight, is, by the way, wrongly described as "op. 86." The piece was written about 1802 and has no opus number. Denis Matthews' playing of Beethoven's *Sonata in E major, op.* 109, is a thorough success. It is clear that enormous care has gone into his exposition of the music, which is very well recorded. In my view this issue supplants that of Schnabel, in which the passage-work is very messy. On side six is a *Suite in G minor* by Purcell, entrancingly played. Most disappointing is the new disc of Ravel's *Ondine*. No pianist who cannot manage the right-hand figure at the outset, correctly and up to time, should attempt this daunting piece. Beg, borrow, or steal Gieseking's magnificent (but deleted) record, if you wish to test the lameness of Mlle Haas's rendering. Rubinstein has incurred violent blame in some quarters for his playing of *Napoli*—I can't imagine why. His interpretation is quite in accordance with Poulenc's markings and the piano tone is particularly good. Greatly as I admire Jeanne Demessieux's record (Decca) of the D minor *Toccata and Fugue*, I must admit that Germani's is altogether grander and more virile. Do not miss this, even if you possess the other. Marcel Dupré's rather monotonous registering is a good deal less effective in reproduction than Germani's, but the recording is beautifully clear.

VOCAL: Wagner *Tristan*—Isolde's Narration and Curse (Flagstad/Höngen/Philharmonia/Dobrowen, DB6748-9); Tchaikovsky: *Eugen Onegin*—Tatiana's Letter Scene (Welitsch/Philharmonia/Süsskind, LX1108-9); Donizetti: *La Favorita*—"Fia dunque vero" (Act 3) (Stignani/Augusteo/Bellezza, LX1106); Borodin: *Prince Igor*—Kontchak's Aria (Raphael Arie/Suisse Romande/Karr, K1965); Thomas: *Mignon*—"Addio Mignon" and "Ah non credevi tu" (Di Stefano/Orch./Erede, DB6618); Puccini: *Tosca*—"Tre sbirri" and "Tosca e un buon falco" (Giampiero Malaspina/Covent Garden/Mudie, DX1514); Purcell: *The Queen's Epicedium* (Pears/Britten, DB6763); Ravel: *Shéhérazade* (Suzanne Danco/Paris Conservatoire/Ansermet, K1966-7). Mme Flagstad delivers Isolde's strenuous protestation with an assurance that is gloriously justified. The recording of her voice is not entirely successful: all notes of *mezzo-forte* and above tend to have a haze round them. As Brangäne Mme Höngen is perfectly adequate. On side four is an uninteresting performance of "Im Treibhaus" (No. 5 of the Wesendonck songs). At last a complete recording of Tatiana's *Letter Scene*—surely one of the most perfectly realised pieces of operatic composition in existence! This is from every point of view a sensational issue: the singing is commandingly expressive, the tone dazzling, the recording spacious and agreeable. The aria from Act 3 of *La Favorita* is beautiful in itself and dramatically sung; but the disc is unsuitably powerful both in style and recording, and there is an annoying cut. Raphael Arie gives an impressive account of Kontchak's gentlemanly invitation. Here is a really *musical* bass, excellent in characterisation. This captivating aria is admirably recorded. Without questioning the quality of Di Stefano's voice, I do not care for his singing in *Mignon;* it is very un-French and much too consistently loud. This issue is, however, less crude and ugly than the *Tosca* disc—a deplorable affair which does nothing to substantiate the claims made for the singer. Purcell's eloquent ode on the interment of Queen Mary is most intelligently realised. Except when he presses on a high note, Peter Pears' tone is agreeably clear and ringing, and he phrases with admirable taste. I should have liked the accompaniment to be a thought less self-effacing. Ravel's sensuously lovely piece of Impressionism is sung with understanding and a steadily beautiful tone. The orchestral part is rather dry, but on the whole this is an extremely good set.

Space-saving key: DB, DA, C=HMV.
LX, LB, DX=Columbia.
K, M=Decca.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

CORRECTION.

The publisher of *Lord Alfred Douglas*, reviewed in our issue of October 23rd, was incorrectly given as Michael Joseph. This should have been Herbert Joseph.

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The Times Literary Supplement, 16 October 1948.

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Week-end Competitions
No. 977

Set by Richard Lister

Prizes of Six Guineas are offered for an acrostic poem on GUY FAWKES. Entries by November 16th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 974

Set by Naomi Lewis

Ancient methods of curing the spleen or encouraging fertility are being discussed by scientists. Prizes are offered for a charm in eight lines of verse for one of the following: alleviating frustration; bringing about a change of government or removing a political figure from office; breaking the habit of smoking; winning a NEW STATESMAN Competition; obtaining domestic help; getting through the Customs.

Report by Naomi Lewis

I had hoped to judge these entries by practical test; but at time of going to press can report no positive results. Competitors, a lighthearted or maybe resigned lot, seemed more concerned to gain a prize than to allay frustration: hardly a nostrum arrived for the relief of this popular malady. The most likely charms are surely those which serve their ingredients with an air of incantation (our winners caught this admirably); the lay user needs to be reassured by an off-focus arrangement of words here and there. Some verses with good ideas, notably David's "To Confounde the Excife," just missed this spell-like quality.

But as we should expect in this case, the regular winners—obviously registered with a reliable necromancer—were among the chief scorers. A guinea and a half is awarded to F.C.C.; a guinea each to Joyce Johnson, Arnold Morris, L.E.J.; half a guinea each to Karen Bower, H. Forsyth, Robert Gaffikin. Very near winners were John Grant, A. Westlake, David, Dorothy Wright, J. Raymond Majer, and there were others of a high standard. I am sorry to have to add that one competitor (suspended from this column for six months) attempted to influence the verdict by a charm invoking the judge by name. On no account are spells to be directed at individual setters.

Charm for obtaining Domestic Help.

Sabaóth Zagoúre: Patoúre Eloaí.
By these hidden Names I speak,
Woman, help us all the week.
Ablathanalba hear my spell,
Come on Saturdays as well.
By the hidden Names of power,
Come for half-a-crown an hour.
O Soronophris Paphro: Baroúkh Adonaí Eloaí.

F.C.C.

For winning a New Statesman Competition.

Towan, Towan, kick the bucket;
Witt, be dull; and empty, Till.
A. M. Lainguish. Prize, I pluck it.
Sharpless lines are pointless still.
Melican, Melican't,
Hapless Bliss,
L.E.J.'s elegies
Can't beat this.

JOYCE JOHNSON

Treatment of Chain-smoking.

The charm below is recommended by O.P. Smoker, chairman of a faith-healing society. He claims a cure rate of 60 per cent, but warns that the treatment has a definite though small mortality rate, in his hands of 2 per cent.

Prescription.

The charm to be committed to memory and recited after each meal; also when anticipating the offer of a cigarette. In moments of great urgency the first invocation alone may be used. The second should be reserved for acute distress and followed by a three-mile run: it ought not to be used more than once a week at the onset of treatment.

First Invocation:
Pheno, pheno, barbitone,
Pheno, pheno, barbitone.
Body of Charm:
Arteriosclerosis
Follows too much smoking,
Coronary thrombosis,
Headache and psychosis.
Second Invocation:
Colney Hatch, give it up,
Colney Hatch, give it up,
give it up.

A. MORRIS.

For removing a political figure.

(To be chanted while melting a wax-figure of victim).

Valé Palé Manuel
Bane of Four, Sea-sand, Fuél,
Tinker's cuss and Owlet's Hoot
Tip for sack and tail for boot
Butting sin on Bevin's Beat.
Put on Matin down in street
Shin you ill or shin you well
Valé Palé Manuel.

L.E.J.

For the Removal from Ofyse of anne Undesirable Politickal Figure.

Scorne the shafte of tongue and toothe;
alle swych methodes are uncoothe.
Neither plye the poyson penne;
leters are for lessere menne.
Cultiuate the wynynge smile,
gayne his harte with goblynne gyle:
and with puncktilio politick
tinct his tee with arsenick.

KAREN BOWER.

Charm for getting through the Customs.

Torkum chorkum pass me through,
Search my bags without a clue,
Catch the next man in the queue,
Nihil declarare!
Fijity fibity though I lie
Take my word and let me by,
In foro conscientiae—
Nihil declarare!

H. FORSYTH

Spell for obtaining Domestic Help.

(To be repeated until relief arrives.)

As we dish dams elf land ersjade
Adar keir ancol leen
Ach ink aja pan egrom aid
Ap rimi tives lo vene
Letch ance buts endaw ench oft hese
Tomo pour dus tyf loor
Tow ash ourd in nerdi shesp lease
Wed ono task form ore.

Perhaps this had better be translated for the benefit of the adjudicator.

A Swedish damsel, Flanders jade,
A dark Eiran colleen,
A Chink, A Jap, a negro maid,
A primitive Slovene.
Let chance but send a wench of these
To mop our dusty floor,
To wash our dinner dishes, please
We do not ask for more.

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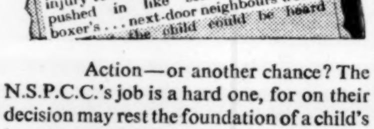

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Appointments Vacant

None of the vacancies in these columns relates to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or a woman between 18 and 40 inclusive unless he or she is excepted from the provision of the Control of Engagement Order, 1947, or the vacancy is for employment excepted from the provision of that Order.

KEEPER of the Records of Scotland. Applics. invited for post of Keeper of the Records of Scotland, the officer responsible for custody and preservation of historical and legal records at the General Register House, Edinburgh. Candidates should pref. be between 35/50 and must have a competent knowledge of Scottish history, incl. charters and other records, and of palæography. They will be expected to show evidence of capacity for record administration. An Hons. degree in History and a kndge. of Scottish Feudal Law and Conveyancing will be additional qualifics. Post is pensionable under Superann. Acts and will carry a salary of £1,500 p.a. incl. for a man. For a woman the salary will be somewhat lower. Further partics. and forms of applic. may be obtained from Establishment Division, Scottish Home Dept., Room 355, St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh, 1, with whom applics. must be lodged by Nov. 30.

KEEPER of the Registers of Scotland. Applics. invited for post of Keeper of the Registers of Scotland (incl. Sasines, Deeds and Chancery) Candidates should pref. be between 35/50. They must have a Scottish legal qualific., admin. capacity and practical exp. of law and conveyancing. Post is pensionable under Superann. Acts and will carry a salary of £1,400 p.a. incl. for a man. For a woman the salary will be somewhat lower. Further partics. and forms of applic. from Establishment Division, Scottish Home Dept., Room 355, St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh, 1, with whom applics. must be lodged by Nov. 30, 1948.

THE Central Council for Health Education invites applics. for appointment of whole-time Educ. Officer at salary of £800×£25 to £900 p.a. A high standard of academic qualifics., professional exp. and standing, and lecturing ability is essential. Travelling and subsistence allowances; Staff Pension Fund. Forms of applic. and further partics. may be obtained from Medical Adviser & Secy., Central Council for Health Education, Tavistock House, Tavistock Sq. London, W.C.1. on receipt of a s.a. foolscap env. and must be returned, tog. with copies of two recent testimonials, by Nov. 20.

UNIV. of Durham. King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The Council of King's College invite applics. for post of Lecturer in Education. Candidates should be qualified to lecture in methods of teaching History (and/or English) with grad. students. Sal. scale rises by annual increments of £25 to a max. of £850. Commencing sal. of successful applicant will be fixed at a point on that scale in accordance with his qualifics. and exp. Family allowance and F.S.S.U. Duties to commence Jan. 1, 1949. Twelve copies of application, together with three testimonials or names of three persons to whom ref. may be made, should be submitted to G. R. Hanson, Registrar of King's College, from whom further partics. may be obtained, by Nov. 16.

B.B.C. invites applics. for post of Programme Assistant in the Russian Section, Overseas Services, from candidates whose mother tongue is Russian or whose knowledge of the language is of equiv. standard, obtained for instance through schooling in Russia or in Russian schools abroad. They must be able to read fluently and agreeably in Russian, and to translate from English into that language texts on a great variety of subjects. They must be familiar with the language now used in Russia in the Press and on the radio; they must have an intimate knowledge of English and show ability in translating for broadcasting purposes. Starting salary £540 (may be higher if qualifics. and exp. are exceptional), rising by £35 to £785 max. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, marked "Russian P.A. N. Stm.," within 7 days. For acknowledgment enclose s.a.e.

CITY of Liverpool. Deputy Director of the Walker Art Gallery. Applics. invited for above appointment at a salary in accordance with A.P.T. Grade VI (£595-£660 p.a.). Applicants should possess a knowledge of the fine arts, and pref. will be given to those who have a Univ. degree or Diploma of the Museums Assocn., and some admin. exp. Person appointed will be reqd. to devote his whole time to duties of the office, and to pay over to the Corporation any fees or other monies received by him in connection with the appointment. He will also be reqd. to pass a medical exam. and to reside within the City. Appointment is superannuable and subject to Standing Orders of the City Council, and will be determinable by 3 calendar months' notice on either side. Applics., on forms to be obtained from this office, must be addressed to me (endorsed "Deputy Director, Walker Art Gallery") and be received by Mon., Nov. 15, 1948. Canvassing disqualifies. Thomas Alker, Town Clerk, Municipal Buildings, Dale St. Liverpool, 2.

PERSONNEL Dept. in South London Factory reqs. Statistical Officer. Preference given to young grad. who has sound reasons for entering the field of personnel work. No previous exp. reqd. except for some knowledge of statistics. Candidate is not expected to hold position of Statistical Officer for more than two years by which time opportunity will have been provided for training and participation in wider field of personnel policy. Commencing sal. (man or woman) £300 to £400, depending on qualifics. Selection of candidates will be by the Group Discussion method. Apply with details to Box NS 830, L.P.E., 110 St. Martin's Lane, W.C.2.

OCCUPATIONAL Therapist reqd. for Home nr. Dorking. Reply Sec., Jewish Blind Socy., 5 Stanhope Terrace, London, W.2.

Appointments Vacant—continued

HAMPSHIRE. Senior Mental Health Social Worker. Application is invited for post of Senior Mental Health Social Worker on headquarters staff of the Health Department. Salary will be on Grade V of National scale for Local Authorities' Administrative staff, namely £520, rising by three annual increments to £570 p.a. Applicants must be qualified and expd. in Mental Health social work, particularly in respect of mental defectives. Duties will mainly comprise the organization of mental health visiting by voluntary workers in addition to eight Area Welfare Officers on the County staff, but will include occasionally deputising for Senior Petitioning Officer in presenting petitions. The officer will be reqd. to reside near Winchester and to provide a motor car. Travelling allowances will be paid on the national scale. Applics., addressed to County Medical Officer, Health Department, The Castle, Winchester, should be submitted before Nov. 20.

UNIV. of Wales. Univ. College of N. Wales, Bangor. Applics. invited for post of Assistant Lecturer in Classics. Sal. £450 p.a. plus superann. and family allowances, if applicable. Appointment will be for three years in first inst. Applics. should reach Glyn Roberts, Secy. and Registrar, from whom further partics. must be obtained, by Nov. 20, 1948.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Educ. Cttee. Sawston Village College Secondary Modern School (Boys and Girls). Art Master reqd. to teach Art and Pottery throughout the school. In addition successful candidate will be reqd. to fire work from other schools in the County. Sal. in accordance with Burnham Scale with allowance of £50 for a Post of Special Responsibility. Application forms (which should be returned as soon as possible) will be forwarded, together with further partics., on receipt of a s.a. foolscap env., by Chief Educ. Officer, Shire Hall, Cambridge.

CITY of Nottingham Educ. Cttee. Residential Youth Hostel—Weston-on-Trent. Applics. invited from married couples for joint appointment as Wardens at the Authority's proposed new Residential Youth Hostel, Weston-on-Trent, Derbyshire. One of applicants should if possible have training or considerable exp. in Youth work and the other should have a knowledge of catering. Hostel is situated in its own grounds on the river Trent in a Derbyshire village fourteen miles South West of Nottingham. It will provide accomm. ultimately for 60 young people both male and female. Joint annual sal. payable is £400, together with emoluments (unfurn. residence, light, heat and food) valued at £95 p.a. for each Warden. Local Govt. Officer Supperann. Forms of applic. (which should be returned by Nov. 15) and conditions of appointment from F. Stephenson, Director of Educ., Educ. Office, South Parade, Nottingham, on receipt of s.a.e.

LEICESTERSHIRE Educ. Cttee. County Library. Applics. invited from Chartered Librarians for post of Senior Assistant in the Centre Exchange Dept. Sal. in accordance with A.P.T. Grade I of the N.J.C. Scales (£390×£15—£435). Commencing sal. according to qualifics. and exp. Applics. (no forms), giving full partics. of qualifics. and exp. and accompanied by copies of two recent testimonials and names of two refs. shd. reach Director of Educ., Grey Friars, Leicester, by Nov. 20.

WILTSHIRE C.C. Education Cttee. Applics. invited for following Youth Service appointment. Malmesbury: Leader-Organiser. The officer appointed will work under a local committee and will be responsible for development of Youth Service activities in the town, incl. the leadership of a small mixed club. Recog. training and exp. is essential. Salary will be in accordance with Grade II of Miscellaneous Division of Natl. Scales, viz., £375×£15×£420. Canvassing directly/indirectly will be a disqualification. Further partics. & applic. forms from Director of Educ., County Hall, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

INFORMATION Bureau of large industrial concern requires a Visual Aids Production Officer. Applicants should be familiar with methods of production of film-strips, wall charts, models and photographic displays; they should understand the needs of potential users of the material (particularly schools); above all, they should possess a good sense of visual presentation. Applications to Box 6249 before Nov. 30.

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